

# This Old House

**GUESS WHO'S COMING TO  
YOUR HOUSE?** (page 18)



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A large, warm-toned kitchen with a central island. The island has a wooden countertop and a lower shelf with various items. Above the island, a metal pot rack hangs from the ceiling, holding several copper pots. The kitchen features wooden cabinets, a large window with a flower box, and a stainless steel oven. The floor is covered in a light-colored laminate material.

Q.

A.

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10. No recipes, just design ideas. (Swedes are better at flooring than cooking.)

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www.thisoldhouse.com  
 AOL Keyword: This Old House



OCTOBER 2002

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TV project house on Winchelsea  
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**COVER:** This This Old House team—host Steve Thomas, general contractor Tom Silva, plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey, and landscape contractor Peter Green—built the new TV project house on Winchelsea Hillside, page 126. For more info on the job, page 10. PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLER & KELLER

ILLUSTRATION: GARY HARTLEY; KITCHEN AND BATHROOM: GARY HARTLEY; GROUND COVER: MICHAEL GREEN; PORCH: PHOTOPROJECT; KITCHEN: KIM KOSMIN

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—KEVIN THORNTON, THE OLD HOUSE BOY

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and affects indoor air quality by not letting the air circulate through the filtering system long enough to be effective.

The bottom line here is Manual J calculation run on your home before changing the system. I've seen hundreds of systems that were oversized from the get-go or never changed when the home was made more efficient with tighter windows and doors, insulation, etc.

Bob in Boston [www.bostonradio.com/GuestForum\\_MJ](http://www.bostonradio.com/GuestForum_MJ)

TOD's plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey agrees: "The Manual J calculations, or their equivalent, done by an HVAC professional are the only way to be sure you're getting the right size system for your house. Digger isn't always better. An oversize furnace is like a fast-food dinner at a wedding. On the gone to waste on the po-

und gets up to 30 miles an hour only to show up on the brakes at the next light 100 yards ahead. It's more efficient to accelerate slowly, get to the next light just as it turns green, and never have to step on the brakes."

#### The Dark Side of Vinyl Siding

I was disturbed by your article "Vinyl Siding," in the July/August 2002 issue. I find it odd that you should include an article about this potentially dangerous product (its manufacture and use is rife) along with the lighthearted stories about children's cat-sitting and the observation of extreme in wood preservation.

Preserving if siding is house should include an attempt to choose materials that do minimal harm to people and the environment. Vinyl PVC products have been shown to be harmful for the people manufacturing them as well as to the environment in disposing of them. Not to mention the potential release of poisonous gases when these materials are combusted.

Please keep in mind that you represent the sane viewpoint in home building, and every people will take your advice. In this case I feel we all would have been better served if you had discouraged the use of PVC products.

Brian Watson Jr., Pune De, Pitt Co.



#### Beet Scrambling

Regarding the "Mysterious Scoot" question in Ask Home, July/August 2002, I have seen this mystery twice in my building career. In the first case, I was called to take a look at a two-year-old addition in which most had appeared in the kitchen cabinets, in and around all the recessed lighting, and at all the eaved joists and access heads. I thought it might have been the woodworker's Maraboworm chimney along with the usual wood-bore insect. The owner got rid of the stove; the cabinets came and we repaired. After three months the scot reappeared, and we were really surprised. Before I could even investigate, the scot leaked where we had taken the chimney out. I crawled through the access panel to the inside of the two scot and found the source of the Mysterious Scoot. The underside of all the plywood and the top of all the insulation were covered in a quarter-inch of mold. I pulled up the insulation to find the black "scot" lay-

ered on the back side of the ceiling drywall. The effect of this addition had scot-like vent.

The other case was the same scenario but in the unvented attic bays of a house framed with true rafters. We installed batts through the valley rafters to allow the bays that did not reach the rafters to breathe.

I would wager a paycheck that those homeowners have mold, not scot. It may be worth a GED test that also opens to find out.

Steve Cunn, Coonville, Mo.

The letter on mold revealed a problem I had in a rental house that nearly killed me. I involved a gas furnace in a relatively new house, which was pretty completely sealed. That meant a lack of combustion air and thus incomplete combustion. The flue became blocked with soot, and the furnace began seeking it in the house. The fire finally got so plugged that it led to a small explosion and a chimney fire. That got the owner's and my attention. According to the officials, the house had been filled with carbon monoxide because of the fireplace combustion and the blockage of the flue. I

installed a breather to the outside in the furnace room. Never had the problem again.

This reader's problem sounds similar. I would be especially concerned because his "furnace starter malfunctioned," that owner mentions it is a three-year-old house.

Combustion air is something building codes officials are only now becoming aware of. I suppose it is like when there was enough air infiltration. Maybe there's not in modern houses, with their wraps, R60 insulation, and sealing of all openings. But even in all my houses I install a combustion air vent to the furnace room and the fireplace.

Amos D. Beards, Winchester, Va.

#### Flying Trapdoor Alert

My husband and I are a great vacation team, only rarely alarming a homeowner as a spouse's finger is dropping lumber on his or her head. But we had a close call a couple of years ago while installing a sliding door that had taught us an important safety lesson. With my hand-bored stationed in the attic and we as a stopper below, we hefted the heavy roll into place. Great, got it. But as my husband jock-

eyed the roll into place on the temporary support frame, it slipped so far to one side of the opening. Yikes! The whole door popped out of the support, bounced off the wall, bounced off the wall, and crashed to the ground. It seemed the way out and I started the first that nobody left but boys active matter to egg them.

Next time we attempt to install an attic door [?], we often to remove the wall during the installation phase by running a rope to the ceiling above or bracing from below with 2x4s. Safety first, right?

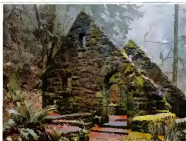
Lee Skowronski, Oklawaha Hills, Fla.

#### punch list

includes a list of items commonly seen in remodeling or in

• In the July/August 2002 issue, several items were seen to merit. The items continue on p. 4, please in any of my in Many Remodeling, design by Good Case, a 15, all of them by Daniel L. Loomis, p. 111-113, "Mistake in America," copies for photos was Anthony Adams.

Source and/or: Anthony, 100 Old House magazine, 788 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10005. or e-mail as at 100, available many times. Please, include your full name, address, and phone number. Publications will be subject to review and length and may be used in other media.



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COOPER Tools

By Dee D'Arcy



## Answer Men

*This Old House* experts tackle viewers' questions in a new weekly TV show called *Ask This Old House*

For the past 25 years, fans of *This Old House* have been waiting for the show seeking expert advice on everything from drying out wet basements to studying wobbly stair railings. But when a similar problem cropped up at one of the project houses, answers to those questions nearly made it to air.

Until now, that is. This month the producers and cast of 2007 premiere a brand-new television show. Called *Ask This Old House*, the half-hour program will focus on

solving viewers' home-maintenance problems in a series of short segments. The show will feature the familiar faces—and expert guidance—of host Steve Thomas, general contractor Tom Silva, plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey, and landscape contractor Roger Cook, as well as guest experts in other fields. They'll demonstrate hands-on techniques and share their wisdom, either at the show's semi-lab headquarters or on home calls to homeowners across the country, hosting their workshop-on-wheels,

the *Ask This Old House* trailer (above).

Already there's a sense among the TV-show crew that they're on to something big. "There's a common sense between us and the homeowners that's going to be as fun as it is informative," says Tom. "It's going to be really great."

To submit questions call 800-ASK-THIS-OLD-HOUSE, visit [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com) or write to: *Ask This Old House*, 7000 Avenue of the Americas, 27th Floor, New York, NY 10022



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**Q:** In which decade did Americans build the most single-family houses?

For answers, see page 22.

## OCTOBER CALENDAR

Steve Thomas  
October 18th  
and 19th

Oregon Hot Springs Spa store opening,  
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PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/GETTY IMAGES

ask's top picks with a fall twist



## WANTED: Your Kitchen

Enter our first-ever Dream Kitchen search and *This Old House* could end up coming to your house to do the work

Usually, as winter approaches, the TOW TV crew heads somewhere warm to do a renovation project for their daily New England. This year, they're hooked up another plan: look up a kitchen remodeling project, together with NBC's *Tuesday* show, via a nationwide search for the first-ever *This Old House* Dream Kitchen.

Anybody can enter, as long as they have a remodeling plan ready and can share that they have the financial means to achieve it. As with all *This Old House* projects, the homeowner will foot the bill, though materials may be heavily discounted or donated, and much of the advice and labor will be provided by Norm, Tom, Rich, Roger, and Steve.

A panel of judges will select the block of entries down to a group of finalists representing six geographical regions of the country. Each of the finalists will be profiled on the *Tuesday* show during one week in November. Then viewers will vote for the winner. The TOW crew is set to start work later that month and finish up by late February or early March, when the completed project will be revealed to both *This Old House* and *Tuesday* show TV audiences.

"If you're going to redo your kitchen, who better to handle the job than *This Old House*?" says Steve, echoing the sentiments of the thousands of viewers each year who write offering their homes.

### **How to Enter**

Subscribers must include the following (for full requirements, go to [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com)):

- A one- to two-page, double-spaced summary of the intended kitchen renovation.
- Up to six good-quality photographs of the kitchen in its current state.
- Five years of the mailing address and the projected renovation, including measurements.
- A dedicated money box from which to make long payments (roughly into the kitchen and not into a safe or vault).

**Send to:**  
 Dream Kitchen  
 This Old House, P.O. Box 190  
 Concord, MA 01741-0190  
 Entries must be received by October 31, 2002.

ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL GOODMAN

# Share the Day

Kodak and *This Old House*® shared the joy of neighbors helping neighbors during AmeriCares HomeFront Day 2002.



The official camera of AmeriCares HomeFront Day 2002, the Kodak Max HQ one-time use camera was given to 140 volunteer teams to capture the "before and after" of their repair projects. AmeriCares HomeFront Day is a one-day community-based home repair program that offers free repair assistance to those with physical and financial limitations.

For more Kodak moments from HomeFront Day 2002, visit the [AmeriCares.org](http://AmeriCares.org) website.



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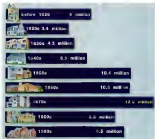


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A:

## The 1970s

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 12,850,000 houses, or about 18% of homes built before the 21st century, were constructed between 1970 and 1979



## FOU TECHNIQUE

## Accurate Miters

This Old House general contractor Tom Silva shows how to cut gapless joints on out-of-square corners.

Not all outside corners are a perfect 90-degree angle, so when Tom Silva squalls mitering, he uses a hand, or perhaps any tool involving a cross, to first find the precise angle for his cuts on the two pieces he has to join. "You can't just assume you need to cut two 45-degree miter or miter where that nice you'll end up with a gap at the joint," he says.

Tom builds one piece of scrap lumber of the same dimension (2x4s, for instance) up to the corner—use on top of the other, edges hugging the walls—and makes two lines on the lower board where the pieces overlap (Figure 1). Using a straightedge, he then joins the two marks with a diagonal line (Figure 2). By lining up his saw on that diagonal and following its angle, he is guaranteed a perfect joint every time.



## Spray and Stick

Not more pumping a caulking gun full of thick, gooey construction adhesive for Tom Silva—that's the conundrum as easy to apply than that sprays right out of a can. We Green Glue. The aerosol product is as effective as traditional construction adhesive on everything from plywood and drywall to metal and concrete. And it can be cheaper to boot, if you need to stick a lot of stuff. One \$15 to \$20 can is equivalent to 15 or more \$6 quart tubes of construction adhesive. After an initial investment of \$45 in the gun applicator, Tom found himself saving not only money but time reloading. "It's one-finger-fing, fast and easy," says Tom, who always clicks on the chime.



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## ON THE JOB



## BEFORE & AFTER

**PUSHING THE ENVELOPE:** Built from a lot during the Depression, this lakefront fishing shack in Old Lyme, Connecticut, never got beyond its humble origins until owners Roger and Nicole Bering saw in it the potential for a dream retirement home. By enlarging the screened-in porch and adding a second story, including two floors

being public hang-outs, they completely transformed its appearance—and surely quadrupled their living space in the bargain.

Have you dramatically altered the look of your house? If so, send photos and article suggestions, plus a brief description of the project, to: *The Old House* CO., 1111 Avenue of the Americas, 27th floor, New York, NY 10036.



## Remote Readings

By last count, there were more 275 million electric, gas, and water meters in this country, all of which have to be read if homeowners and towns are to get accurate bills. But if you're asked that an earth comes around to take a reading today, it's probably because your house has one of the more than 11 million now in operation across that our automatic meter-reading (AMR) metering utility companies use to do

remote readings using transmitting devices hard to the meters like signals are sent rather over power and phone lines or to a food or meter, as you know. Most and some utility companies are making the switch to AMR, making in the way with automated readings, which when sent to homeowners being billed for more or less than their usual usage. If you haven't noticed a new meter yet, you're not

## OLD YELLER

ONE OF THE MORE 500 BUILT homes in the Yale Old House research library is the Preservation Yellow Pages (Preservation Press), a national directory of contact data and information on preservation resources. Whether you're trying to decipher a line print about applying to the National Register of Historic Places or find the historic preservation contact info for any Old wood South Dakota, the directory is sure to deliver. Available for \$29.95 from water valley press.



## New National Poison Control Number



A sort of poison-control 911, this number takes the place of the 10 separate local hotline numbers—though those will remain active. A call to the new toll number anytime will connect you to your local poison-control center and a trained operator who can provide information and medical advice about toxic substances. The operator will even call an ambulance in an emergency.

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# HOUSE CALLS WITH STEVE



**BEFORE (LEFT):** The original kitchen was a 1970s relic with dark, dingy cabinets, cheap, stained oak flooring, and a tacky gold dishwasher. **AFTER:** By reimagining appliances, painting the now-solid cabinets, and installing a new oak floor, the homeowners transformed their kitchen far less than some people spend on a fridge.

## Style on a Shoestring

A cheerful kitchen makeover that's easy on the wallet

By Heather Smith MacIsaac

**T**urning a dreary, dated kitchen into a charming, efficient cooking and dining space doesn't have to cost a fortune. Michael and Maria MacIsaac did it for just \$1,190.

The kitchen in their 1971 Cape in Brooklyn, New York, was a low, open room with two facing banks of cabinets. The appliances were at one end and a dining table at the other. The dark-pine cabinets, stamped oak flooring, and hardwood floors were out of date and out of sync with the couple's traditional tastes.

But for the do-it-yourselfers, the big ticket overhaul was out of the question: "The whole house needed a lot of work, but the kitchen was the worst," says Maria. "Luckily, Michael had a vision for making the room that fit our small budget." By keeping the existing cabinetry plus the fridge and stove—which were in good shape—and tackling much of the work himself, he knew they could save big bucks. They wouldn't need as much space



Before

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**BOSCH**



## HOUSE CALLS WITH STEVE



walls, doors, or windows to improve the room's layout, just sweep the stove and refrigerator locations. And by adding a table to serve as an island and a buffet to separate the cooking and dining areas they gained needed counter space.

"The Shumans made a practical assessment of their situation, which is a critical step in the remodeling process," says This Old House host Steve Thomas. "Like a lot of couples starting out, they know that this is not the house they'll end up with. They simply need a serviceable kitchen, which, when funds are limited, may not justify a major renovation."

With a stack of how-to books and *This Old House* magazines to guide him, Michael installed a new white laminate countertop, put up plywood beadboard wallcovering capped with a pine rail, hooked up a new dishwasher (the only appliance purchase), and transformed the upper cabinet doors by adding new glass panels. Michael's father installed a pair of contemporary chandeliers, and they hired a contractor to replace the sliding door with a center-hung French patio door. The Shumans' biggest concern, though, was the overall rooming (31,000) and the length of the kitchen and dining areas, which Michael analyzed, and polycarbonate-lined Marneville, Marneville made the old breath off the place cabinets, then primed and painted them the same white as the trim and a water table that became an island. She painted the new second-pair glass and the walls above it cream. "We weren't after a specific style as much as something warm, comfortable, and easy on the eye," says Michael. The light, bright scheme transformed the once dull kitchen into a room that's sunny and cheerful.

In Steve's final analysis, the result is terrific. "For the price of a fancy fridge, the Shumans got a whole new kitchen." ■

**For more information**  
Go to: [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com) or America Online keyword: **This Old House** and click on "Kitchen."



Floor Plan



The layout of the 12-by-25-foot room, which functions as both kitchen and dining room, actually didn't change much. Simply by moving the stove to where the refrigerator had stood, the Shumans gained nearly 3 feet of much-needed prep space. An extended-top table acts as an island work station, and a beadboard sliding door to the deck was replaced by a center-hung French patio door that enhances the room's charm.



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way to go." Replacement doors come in a variety of styles and materials, including finished or unfinished wood and composites like MDF (medium-density fiberboard) with a plastic-laminate veneer or thermofoil (a sheet of plastic veneer). Solid surface or at least composites start around \$15 for a finished MDF door. Once you pick a style, the door is custom-made to your old cabinet's measurements. Then, hardware can be appended to finish the look.

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# Ask THIS OLD HOUSE



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SILVER  
Crew chief



**RICK WARREN**  
Electrician &  
Plumbing



**ADAM CAROLLA**  
SILVER  
Crew chief



**BOB COSTELLO**  
SILVER  
Crew chief



**STEVE TRUMBULL**  
SILVER  
Crew chief

## FOAM AND WIRING

I know that foam insulation is popular with you guys. But as an electrician, I'm concerned that it limits options for any future wiring. Once it's in place, how can I snake wires

through these walls if the homeowner wants to get to another circuit or add a switch or receptacle?

DANIEL PAUL, NEWTON, MASS.

**Tom Silva replies:** We've used polyurethane foam only when a number of projects because it doesn't trap moisture, is environmentally safe, malleable, and seals every crevice where it's right back in or out. Basically, we figure the benefits far outweigh the difficulty it might cause when making future wiring changes.

Actually, because the insulation is fairly soft and pliable, retrofitting wiring isn't as bad as you think. On a recent project where we had to run wires from the basement into an upstairs home office, we drilled through the subfloor and wall plate, then pushed a fish tape right up through the foam. It wasn't the easiest way to go, but I'm sure you've found that snaking wires through fiberglass batts can be a challenge, too.



Insulation density from makes excellent insulation, and it's not forgiving enough to allow retrofit wiring.

Still, we do try to anticipate the problems future electricians might face. In some cases, we've put lengths of electrical conduit vertically in the walls and tapped both ends before filling them with foam. This way, when we're snaked easily from one end to the other if a project ever wants to.

## SLOW DRAIN

The floor in our old up porch was recently raised because the washing machine overflowed. We then moved the washer to the other side of the porch to allow better access to a utility sink, but no drain will overflow. We don't have this problem anywhere else in the house, which was built around 1924. Any hints on what to do?

MARK HOSKINS, GLENDALE, KANS.

**Richard Trethewey replies:** First have your plumber make sure there's nothing stopping up the washer drain. Then test him to check the vent pipe in the attic—this one that sticks up through your roof—to see whether it's plugged by debris (like some unfortunate animal's carcass) and to make sure the washer's drain is connected to it. The vent equalizes air pressure so water can flow freely down the drain. Without it, overflows will occur whenever you drain a lot of water at once, which is exactly what washers do. (The same principle applies when you try to empty a soda bottle by spicing it upside down—the liquid gushes out slowly.)

If neither the drain nor the vent is blocked, and the washer is properly connected to the vent, you probably have an undersize or corroded drain pipe. And even if they are in good shape, today's appliances pump out more water (it's a better rule than out once did) so it makes sense to bump up the size of the drain. If your washer feeds into a pipe that is now 1 1/2 inches in diameter, for instance, increase it to 2 inches, all the way from the washer's drain back to the main waste pipe.

## WOOD FLOOR FOR RADIANT HEAT

My husband and I are building a two-story home in Massachusetts, with in-floor hydronic heat. Although we love the look of flamed 3-inch-wide solid-oak flooring, I've read that 2 1/2-inch quartersawn oak is less likely to cup in this application. But the local flooring and heat-

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ing contractors both say that if the wood is properly dried and installed, 3-inch battens would be fine. What do you think?

KATHLEEN GARDNER, DALLAS, MISS.

**Norm Abrams replies:** What you've read is correct, but that doesn't make your contractor wrong. Cupping is best dealt with solid wood strips 2½ inches wide (or less) or with engineered flooring, which is made of solid wood. The floor itself is likely to cup, and it's better to cupping resistance, narrow is better than wide. Engineered is better than solid, and quarter-sawn is better than flat-sawn. What you like is a compromise in the middle of these extremes, so it should be fine as long as its moisture content doesn't exceed 8 percent and it's installed properly in dry houses. I added a little extra insurance against cupping by priming the back side of the flooring with urethane, which helps seal out moisture.

You can also minimize problems by keeping the temperature and humidity inside your house as even as you can—hydrolic floor systems shouldn't see daily temperature swings anyway—and by holding the



In the chimney lining, or the house? Either way, the situation requires a professional remedy.

floor's surface temperature below 60°F. Since that's a floor where the housewires and the hydrolic system get too hot, and the wood was soaked in a leaky oil, shovels and rakes removed. One more thing: If you decide to use engineered flooring, check the warranty—some products are not rated for use over heated floors.

## LEAKING CHIMNEY

My husband and I are fixing up his grandfather's 100-year-old single-story house. There's a brick chimney on each end, and one has pulled away from the house about 2 feet at the top. Is there anything we can do to save the chimney? We're both 65—too old, really, to start something like this—but we want to preserve this old home.

MARK KENNEDY, INDEPENDENCE, N.C.

**Tom Silva replies:** Judging by the photo you sent, it looks like the chimney is leaning away from the house, but it could be the other way around: out houses/in too, after all. You'll need to do something soon because

the situation doesn't look safe. And whether it's the house or the chimney, you shouldn't touch this work on your own. A leaning chimney requires a mason. A leaning house needs a good contractor or structural engineer to suggest ways to pull it back to shape and hold it there.

There's no fix for a chimney that far out of place; you'll have to dismantle and rebuild it. You can wish some of the history of the place be missing in many of the original bricks, as possible, setting in you remove the old masonry first. That's why, before work, ask before you begin the job. Look into the cost of using new brick.

## WIDDY DRYWALL-GAPS

In 1979 your dad built house in middle from pine timber. On the ceiling, the drywall has between the timber rafters, and a kind of rot has appeared where drywall meets wood. The rafters seem to be pulling away, leaving ugly gaps everywhere. Any ideas for a simple fix?

BOB LUGG, NEW DEERFIELD, N.H.

**Tom Silva replies:** Given the age of your house, the timbers have shrunk and as much as they're going in. But even the most well-seasoned wood expands and contracts with changes in humidity, and trying to seal gaps between drywall and timber is a lost cause. Instead, I'd cover the gaps with ½-inch quarter round molding, fastened to the timbers—not the drywall—with 10- or 12-inch nails every 12 to 16 inches. Don't put it too tight against the drywall; you want the molding to move with the beam and not to scrape against the ceiling. To make that molding "invisible," paint it the same color as the ceiling before installing it.

## PLANTS FOR A DRIER BATHROOM?

I live in an old house and my bathroom gets a lot of water on it when we have a heavy rain. I was wondering if there are plants that I could plant along the foundation walls to stop so much water from seeping into the basement.

CORINNE STEVENSON, CORNING, N.C.

**Roger Cook replies:** Well, I suppose a Saguaro cactus or two might do the trick, since a mature specimen can soak up as much as 250 gallons of water after a rainstorm. But I believe of water after a rainstorm is moisture and humidity. It's not exactly a common plant for your climate. But there are some other, more effec-

tive things you can do.

First, make sure your gutters work properly and that the soil near the foundation slopes away from the house. I also recommend putting 3-foot extensions on the end of all downspouts. But if your yard is sloped toward the house you might need a subsurface drainage system—commonly called a French drain—to intercept the water before it gets to the foundation. A French drain generally consists of a network of perforated plastic drainage pipes embedded in a trench filled with drainage stone. Water that reaches the trench filters down through the stone and drains away by the pipes. You can locate the pipes either along the house foundation or out in the yard. It's the main source of water. Let a landscape contractor advise you on whether or whether type of exterior will fit your yard and budget.

You could also install a drainage system in the basement and connect it to a sump pump. But it's better to catch water before it enters a basement, rather than after it's already in.

## PAINTED WINDOW FRAME

We're about to spend a lot of money on replacement windows. The existing aluminum-framed ones are double-glazed and only about 13 years old, but the seals on two of them have leaked and the glass has fogged up. We're considering wood framed, double-glazed units with bronze glass. But if these seals fail in another 15 years, do you think this plan is worth the expense? Our heating costs aren't really that bad.

BARBARA SCHULTZ, LOUISBURGH, PA.

**Tom Silva replies:** Moisture between the panes of a double-glazed window is a sure sign that the seal around the perimeter has broken. Fogging alone doesn't justify the performance of the window substantially declines after a while, but it's a warning that the window's clock is ticking. Unfortunately, the only way to get rid of the fog is to replace the unit.

The question is: Do you really need double-glazed replacements? There's no way to predict how long a glass seal will last because so many things can take it off, including your installation, stress caused by building movement, high winds, and the careless use of a heat gun when stripping paint. Some manufacturers even warn of damage from pressure washing, window-cleaning chemicals, and sun-reflective window films. The best warranties on window seals these days are for 20 years. Considering your relatively

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## ASAP THIS OLD HOUSE

mid-century double-glazed (or a glass probably isn't worth the premium you'd pay).

If I were you, I'd buy single-glazed wood windows insulated with good-quality wood or steel storm windows. (If you're a fanatic to keep your grapes and bananas from rotting in the sun, both windows and doors can be fitted with single-pane, storm glass, which will also give additional energy savings.) Together, single-glazed windows and storms, or single-glazed units with storm panels attached to the sash, provide energy performance comparable to a double-glazed unit at much less cost. And there's no chance of seal failure.

### WASHER IN THE GARAGE?

My washed clothes is a woman's worst nightmare. The same sits right next to the washer and dryer. My friends and family love to joke that I never have to leave the kitchen to complete all the "housework." That was actually sort of funny for a while, but now I want that washer and dryer gone. Unfortunately, there's no space in any other room and the closet is big enough to fit them. Would they be okay in the garage?

VOYCE BOWETT, GERMMA, OHIO

**Steve Thomas replies:** Unless your garage is heated, any plan to add heat, that probably wouldn't be a good idea. Your winter weather isn't nearly as cold as down here in New England, but it still freezes now and then. Besides, as before, that could spell trouble if water in the supply pipes and drain lines starts to freeze. You'd have a real mess when they thawed out. And even if the pipes never freeze, frequent trips into a chilly garage won't make your laundry chores any fun.

Perhaps you could find room inside your house for one of the front-loading combination washers/dryers that are popular in Europe and saving space-increased efficiency of urban apartments. These are back-hinged units that fold over, looking like a flower because they lie flat. There's at least one unit that doesn't need a dryer vent—a condenser-capable unit of the dryer's air and dumps it down a drain.

Another approach is stacked appliances. Over/under units range from about 21 to 28 inches high but are only 27 inches wide—closest to, in other words. While you might lose some space to hang things, just think of all the kitchen cabinet storage you'd gain.

Sometimes, finding a good spot is just a mat-

ter of thinking outside of the box. When Bob Thompson, the owner of the 1947 project house in West Palm Beach, faced the same problem you have, he put his front-loading washer and dryer under a counter in an eating area off the kitchen. Hidden behind cabinet doors, they operate so quietly you hardly know they're there.

### PAINTING OVER PLASTIC LAMINATE

Is there any way to give our dark brown plastic-laminate kitchen cabinets a new look? I can't replace or refinish them right now, and they're just too dark for the room. I'd appreciate any tips.

TONY RABIAN, VIA E-MAIL

**John Doe replies:** If you're looking at ugly laminate refacing it with not-so-ugly laminate is the best course of action, from the standpoint of durability and ease of care. But if it's just you versus the kitchen to your question is just as long as the laminate is well-adhered to in good condition.

First, I'd wipe down all the surfaces with a solvent such as acetone get rid of dirt and grease. Be sure to use chemical-resistant gloves. Next, I'd use a roller about 1/2 inch in diameter and roll the top—this is powerful stuff. Then sand up all the surfaces with 150-grit sandpaper and wipe them down with water.

Next, you want a primer that will adhere tenaciously and serve as a good base for paint. The one I use is called Zinsser-B-I-M, a company that manufactures building products. They have ten and solvent-based products suitable for your application. I find that the spray-applied primer actually holds better than the brush-on version. Allow two or three days for the primer to cure before sanding it lightly with 220-grit paper. Then you can apply either a latex or oil-based paint. I prefer oil in kitchens because it gives a smoother finish and is easier to clean.

(John Doe, a painting and decorating contractor based in Concord, Mass., has restored finishes on the This Old House project.)

To read a question to ASK THIS OLD HOUSE, go to [www.thisoldhouse.com/askthob](http://www.thisoldhouse.com/askthob) or write to:

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## Raising an Eyebrow

A curved window can add elegance to a roofline

By Jefferson Kelle



Builder Tim Lee installed an expensive eyebrow window on the copper roof of a garage-turned-guesthouse in Laurel Valley, New York.

Imagine curving a horizontal slit in your roof and then, from underneath, pushing on the uphill side, causing a little wave in the plane of the shingles. That's the shape of an eyebrow window—a curvaceous way to get some light and, perhaps, ventilation in a top-floor space while downgrading a building's facade.

The last eyebrows appeared on roadside church-school cottages. They were popularized in America in the second half of the 19th century by Dorson architect Henry Hobson Richardson, the father of the Shingle style. "Richardson's eyebrows—sometimes called eyelids or eyelid dormers—were long, narrow slits with short windows," says Stephen Webb, the architect of the Shingle-style Tijuana Old Mission restoration project in Marin County, Massachusetts. "They added undulating curves to his large, expansive roofs."

Today, eyebrow windows aren't restricted to the roofs of Shingle-style replicas. They're found on buildings as varied as Pasa Mariposa beach houses and the converted-garage guest cottage shown

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bars. Most require a custom-made arch (found or knigged), and all involve tricky framing and roofing. They can be designed in shapes and sizes from soft Swiss-house to one corner to full half-circle. According to Montanaro, New Jersey, architect Nick Bentley, who gets eyebrow on many of his residential projects, "They really look up the masonry of a residential roof or the interior ceiling. Roofs, corners are easy."

But so expensive. "Anyone you build something that looks away from a straight line," says The Old House general contractor Tom Silva, "it costs more." Most window companies routinely make one half-round window, but a more traditional eyebrow seems well at a small segment of a circle—well here to be custom made. Depending on its size and whether the dome is being reinforced or planned as part of a new house, Tom says, an eyebrow can cost upward of \$10,000. Bentley agrees. For comparison purposes, he tells his clients that a simple shed dormer will cost twice the price of a roof skylight and an eyebrow window shows twice as much. Along with the expense of a curve-topped window, the high cost of an eyebrow



More whimsical than a skylight or a dormer, an eyebrow window is a unique way to let in light. Curved framing and shingles add to the cost.

comes from the complicated carpentry it requires. Framing the inside of a curved wall, be it dry-wall or plaster, adds to the cost.

Roofing an eyebrow is also expensive. According to Tan, one method, and quick, method is to cover the curve with malleable copper and to treat it as a separate roof from the other material, whether it's asphalt, wood, or slate. Tom's approach is more traditional, shingling, and time-consuming. He likes to continue eaves from the main roof up and over an eyebrow. "Any roofing will work, but you need an experienced contractor," says Tom. "Because of the curve's geometry, corners of roofing things get shorter as they go up the eyebrow. Join each side of the main roof. It's a little tricky to figure out."

There are less expensive ways to bring light and air into a top-floor room, but few are as dramatic as an eyebrow dormer. "They give a whole new meaning to the phrase 'to throw a curve' at someone," Bentley says.

## Norm Abram's innovative eyebrow

When *This Old House* master carpenter Norm Abram built his house, he knew he wanted a different look for the window in his office. "Daylights were cut because I thought they would let in too much heat," he says. "Also, I wanted to be able to see who was coming up the driveway while sitting at my desk." Norm was thinking about a shed or gable dormer when designer Josh Gilbert came up with a better, 24-in.-high, curve-topped window that looked like a curve, like the eaves of the building's roof itself. It's an eyebrow dormer on the roof.



Norm framed his eyebrow with two separate support structures—one for the roof and one for the ceiling. The rafters are 2x6s, 8 inches on center, that built into a curved header made from four layers of laminated and glued 1/2-inch plywood. He sheathed the eaves with two layers of 1/2-inch plywood (not shingles), which creates a solid 1/2-inch deck that sits into the main roof. Then he shingled the roof with red cedar. Another set of 2x4 interior rafters supports the window and plaster ceiling below (also not shingles).

"Shingling was key," says Norm. "We built everything based on the dimension of the eaves, so when the window manufacturer came and we taped the window into place, there was a quarter-inch to spare." A perfect fit for the framing and for the look of Norm's house.



Norm Abram built his eyebrow on the house with 2x4 rafters framed in a curved and laminated plywood header on one end and to the sheathing of the main roof on the other.



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## Types of Eyebrows

Architects have been using eyebrow windows for years on various styles of houses. The size and shape of an eyebrow and its placement on a roof—high or low—all affect its visual impact. As illustrated here, these windows can take the form of a series of steep, narrow slits or a single large, wide-awake semicircle. When it comes to size, "small eyebrows on a large roof seem like a detail," says architect Nick Bensley, "while a large one on a smaller roof becomes a real standout feature."

Whatever their design, eyebrows go a long way toward breaking up the straight lines of any roof plane.

In the late 19th-century, small eyebrow windows were a frequently used detail on the large roofs of Shingle-style houses.



A large eyebrow is a prominent feature on this contemporary hip-roofed beach house by architect Robert A. M. Stern.



### HALF-ROUND

A semicircular eyebrow—like a cold barrel vault—is sticking in and out.



### EYEBROW DORMER

This tall eyebrow opens on to a balcony with a pair of French doors.



### "STYLED" DORMER

Random exclamation marks used by famed architect of the Shingle style R. H. Richardson.



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## True Grit

How to choose the right sandpaper for the job

By Scott Gibson

**T**he flawless gleam of an oak floor, the smoothness of a painted wall or ceiling, the high gloss of a sandaled shoe—each one sign of a job done well. And all are made possible by the precise, technical application of sandpaper. It's a task many of us wish we could avoid or cut short. Even *The Old House* master carpenter Norm Abram. "Choosing sandpaper often seems like an endless job," he says. But without proper sanding, any imperfections will be magnified when the final finish coat is applied.

The secret to getting good results with fine-surface sanding is to choose the right paper for the job. Sandpaper works by scratching away defects with thousands of tiny abrasive particles. The bigger the particles, or grit, the bigger the scratches. Hence the iron rule of sanding: Start with a grit coarse enough to quickly remove surface imperfections and follow with increasingly finer grits. Each successive grit removes the scratches of the coarser one before, until the scratches themselves become undetectable to the eye and the touch. To prepare bare wood for paint, for instance, Norm starts with 80-grit paper, followed by 100, 120, 150, and 180, and finishes up with 220. (With most sandpapers, the coarser the grit, the smaller

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## All About Abrasives

Once, sandpaper came in two colors: black or tan. In recent years, manufacturers have begun to tint their abrasives with dyes of lilac, teal, or burnt umber to make them stand out from the competition. Now only the natural abrasives—garnet and emery—can be counted on to always display their true colors. Following is a guide to the six most common types.

### NATURAL



#### GARNET

Suitable for sanding bare wood. It's quickly compared with man-made abrasives.



#### EMERY

Excellent for sanding or polishing metal, too soft for other uses. Comes in flexible cloth backing.

### MAN-MADE



#### SILICON CARBIDE

Extremely hard, sharp enough to cut glass, but wears quickly. Best for smoothing joint compound and sanding dust nibs between coats of finish. Extra-fine grits are used for wet sanding the final finish coat.



#### CERAMIC

Softer, more durable, and more expensive than other abrasives often loaded chemically with aluminum oxide. Used primarily on belts and discs for power sanding.



#### ALUMINUM OXIDE

The job of a kitchen abrasive: great for food or power sanding in wood, paint, or metal. Not as sharp as silicon carbide, but lasts longer.



#### ALUMINA HYDROXIDE

As effective as aluminum oxide and aluminum oxide. Sharp, hard, and durable. It cuts faster and lasts longer than aluminum oxide, but isn't as long-lived as ceramic. Prized mostly for belts and discs for machine sanding.

the number.) The progression is to skip a gut in the sequence. "People get impatient," Noren says. "They think a surface isn't shiny, but when the finish goes on, every line and scratch pops out."

Early sandpapers were made of natural materials like pumice, flint, pumice, and emery ground to a paper backing with glue or varnish.

### Clog Stoppers

The amount of abrasive on a piece of sandpaper affects the way it performs. "Open coat" papers have more space between each abrasive particle and so don't clog as quickly with dust. (Dense grits are typically open coat.) In grits finer than 100, where clogging is less of a problem, most sandpapers are "closed coat," covered completely with abrasive. However, note that emery can be combined with aluminum papers open coats as well for soft sands like glass. In addition, some papers are treated with clear silicone, a sticky substance that prevents clogging. Don't use these so-called "non-clogging" papers with water-based finishes, however; the silicon can prevent the finish from adhering properly.



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## Matching the Paper to the Task

Knowing what grit to start with and when to stop is the key to a perfect sanding job. Starting with too coarse a grit leaves deep scratches that are tedious to sand out. But starting with too fine a grit eats up time and paper, as does finishing up with a finer paper than is necessary for the job. Here are some guidelines.

Application	Type of Abrasive	Grits Start → Finish
Steel wheel to be polished	Aluminum oxide or garnet	100* → 220
Welds (60 to 80) to be finished	Aluminum oxide or garnet	100 → 150
Polished or painted wood (in good condition) to be resurfaced	Nonloading aluminum oxide or silicon carbide	100**
Fast removal of paint, wax, etc.	Coarse aluminum oxide or silicon carbide	30
Steel wheel to be polished	Heavy duty or aluminum oxide	100
Between panels of brick	Nonloading aluminum oxide or silicon carbide	220 or 280
Light surface corrosion or rust	Emery cloth or aluminum oxide	400
Paint being sand	Wood outside	120 or 150 papers, followed by 220 paper

\* To remove 60 grits or coarser wheels, start with 36 grit.

\*\* The grit is per inch of wheel, not inches per inch.



### Reading a Sheet

Since now you could read the back of a sheet of newspaper like a book, printed there were the grit size and type, the weight of the paper, the kind of glue used, and whether the sheet was open or closed end. Now, about the only thing you'll consistently find, other than the manufacturer's logo, is the grit size. But even that bit of information can be confusing.

Sandpapers in the U.S. have traditionally been graded according to the Standard Grind, in which the numbers grow larger as the grits get finer. A "P" in front of the grit number designates a European system, which closely corresponds to Standard grades as up to 240 grit, but diverges as the grits get finer. (A P600 is the equivalent of a Standard 400.)

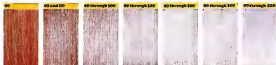
A grit number followed by the Greek letter  $\mu$  (pronounced "muh") indicates micron grading, in which the numbers get smaller as the grits get finer. (A 60 $\mu$  is about the same as a Standard 240.) These ratings "equivalent" micron backing is actually plastic film—some printed by auto-body refinishing and furniture makers.

## Going Through the Grits

Sanding is a step-by-step process of smoothing a surface with progressively finer abrasives. Each successively finer grit smooths away the marks left by the previous, coarser one, until the surface

looks and feels smooth. As demonstrated on this sheet of acrylic, we started with a rough 60-grit on the first panel (see left), then added the non-loading grit, one panel at a time, so that each square was sanded

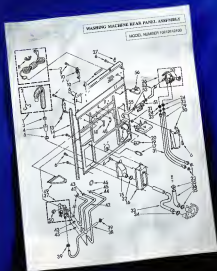
with one more paper than the square before. The last panel (see right) shows the effect of all seven grits: 60, 80, 100, 120, 150, 180, and 220. The super-fine scratches feel smooth to the touch.



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## Stellar Cellars

Climate-controlled wine storage units keep bottles at their best

By Max Alexander

**C**ollecting fine wine is a hobby, but storing them properly is a necessity. Once you commit to buying wines suitable for aging, you can't afford to let them deteriorate from heat, low humidity, or vibrations. Unless you have your own wine cellar, maintaining the optimal temperature of 55 to 58 degrees and humidity above 50 percent can be difficult at home.

Climate-controlled storage units solve that problem. Sizes and prices range from \$500 "mini cellars" that hold just 24 bottles to 6-foot-wide floor-to-ceiling units that can store 600 bottles and cost over \$4,000. Most collectors opt for cabinets that hold 200 to 500 bottles and run \$1,500 to \$3,000, depending on their style and whether they have options like glass doors, slide-out racks, low heat natural lighting, and high-end compressors and humidity monitors. The more decorative, freestanding versions look like wooden armchairs and are usually sold preassembled through mail-order distributors of wine accessories. Typically finished in red oak (finished in the finish of your choosing) with end-grain reinforced or metal shelving, these units are suitable for display in formal areas of the home. Smaller, steel-and-glass kitchen wine coolers aren't designed for holding a large collection, but they keep wine at optimal conditions, and many are compact enough to tuck under a countertop.

Unlike refrigerators, which are meant to operate at a chilly 34 to 40 degrees, wine cabinets and coolers maintain an ideal 55 to 58 degrees. Cooler temperatures slow the molecular changes that produce complexity in fine wine, according to Alexander Haddell, a wine collector and professor emeritus of chemistry at California State University, Stanislaus. Temperatures above 58 degrees speed maturation. In addition, fluctuating temperatures can cause wine to expand and contract in the bottle, allowing oxygen to seep out along the edges of the cork and bring in



**ARMCHAIR** A freestanding wine cabinet installed in a well-ventilated closet glows a built-in cool. The glass door panel cleans off the cabinet, and double-tilt shelves (left) increase storage capacity. Climate-controlled units have a low-vibration motor, such as the one on the model pictured.

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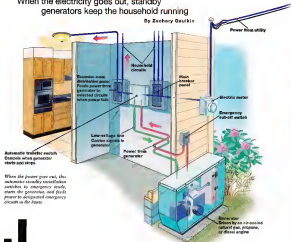




## Backup Power

When the electricity goes out, standby generators keep the household running

By Zachary Gaskin



**J**asper 01 and Phyllis Wynne have lost power dozens of times during the 31 years they've lived in their modest farmhouse in Fairfield, Maine. But after the ice storm of 1998, which left the Wynnes without electricity for more than two days, they decided they'd had enough of living by the light of kerosene lanterns, huddled around a wood stove, with no running water because the well pump was dead. (They saved the food from their refrigerator by burying it in a snowbank.) So Jasper plunked down \$7,000 for a standby generator. Sitting in the garage, an outdoor vented unit is piped through the wall, then de-

signed into power plant produces enough electricity to run their lights, refrigerator, well pump, heater, and water heater—pretty much everything the Wynnes need to weather a power outage. “If we get another storm like this, it’s more than adequate to do everything we need it to do,” Jasper says.

The Wynnes got a growing number of homeowners who are installing generators to guard against long or repeated power outages. Sales of residential units, which briefly spiked during the Y2K scare of the late 1990s, have been steadily increasing, helped in part by rolling blackouts in California,

ILLUSTRATION BY LAW WOLF

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### Watts to Go

Portable generators—the kind you use at home centers and rental outlets—offer a less expensive way to provide reliable backup power, although in smaller amounts and with less convenience than permanently installed generators. The units suited to

home electricity use are gasoline powered, range in size from 3 to 18 kw, and cost between \$1,000 and \$4,000. The only limitation such units are for a transfer switch, an available receptacle for the generator to plug in for (\$200-\$300), and an hour's work for an electrician to wire them together.

Portables are a lifeline for emergency uses, such as

transferring fridges during summer heat waves, and the ever present threat of a violent storm that might rip down power lines.

The unpredictable key of outages gives stationary, permanently installed standby generators a clear advantage over their portable, gas-powered kin, which assemble big four-stroke engines on dollies (see "Watts to Go," above). A portable has to be rolled outside, stored outdoors, and plugged in to the house electrical system, a process that takes several minutes at best—if someone is home to do it. And if an outage lasts more than a few hours, a portable's gas tank is likely to run dry. A permanently installed standby generator, by contrast, is always ready to go and can run nonstop for days, fueled by a natural gas line, or tanks of propane or diesel.

### THE ALL-IMPORTANT TRANSFER SWITCH

When the power goes out at the "Wyehead," they have to flip a manual transfer switch (which isolates the house from the incoming power line), then plug the house that feeds up their wire. For another \$1,000, an automatic transfer switch could do all that work for them. This handy device constantly monitors incoming power, and when it detects an interruption or a serious voltage reduction (a brownout) automatically isolates the house and starts the generator. All told, the process takes 10 to 20 seconds. "You're going to be in the dark for a few seconds, but the power will come back up as soon as the generator comes on," says Bill Perry Sr., owner of Central Maine Diesel and installer of the Wyehead system. The reason for the delay is that the transfer switch waits to see if the power will come back on, so that the generator won't cycle on and off every time the lights dim. When power from the utility returns, the transfer switch waits for a sustained flow of current before it shuts the generator down.

The first step in choosing a generator is to determine how much electricity your household needs on an emergency (see "Sizing a Generator," right). That will tell you how big the generator's output needs to be. Small 4- to 8-kw units, for instance, can power lights and a few critical appliances, while the 21-kw behemoths allow a household to function in-depth the power has never went down. A 10- to 15-kw generator, the size most commonly used for residences,

recharging a car battery or running a circular saw set in the backyard, but they lack the neighborhood credits and massive power of a permanently installed unit. When the power goes out, you have to wheel the generator outside—some big ones weigh more than 400 pounds—wheel it, then plug it in to the house wiring. And if an outage lasts long enough, you'll need to shut the generator off and refill its tank.

Look for models that operate at a low noise level and offer such features as electric starting, an automatic voltage regulator, and a large, 3- to 5-gallon fuel tank, to maximize the run time between refills. Regular maintenance is crucial. Tom Pentec, a spokesman for Honda, recommends that their generators get a monthly "exercise" for 10 to 20 minutes and a round oil change for every 500 hours of operation, whichever comes first. "Engine longevity is purely a function of maintenance," Pentec says.

is usually sufficient to power most home appliances, including such energy suckers as water heaters and window air conditioners. To keep power needs (and generator size) in bounds, an essential loads diagram on panel is a necessity. Only circuits that require emergency power are connected to the panel. Normally, it receives and distributes power from the utility, but during an outage, after the main transfer switch is switched, the panel gets all its power from the generator. (When the outage ends, the panel reverts to utility power.)

A properly sized generator should deliver 10 to 20 percent more power than the total required demand. Running a unit too close to its rated output reduces fuel efficiency and makes the engine run hotter. If completely oversized, the generator's breakers will trip

### Sizing a generator

To figure out how big your generator's output needs to be, make a list of all the appliances you'll load during an outage and add up their surge loads—the amount of electricity a motor needs to start (see table below). Add to this load the raw watts for electrical items without motors, such as light bulbs, water heaters, and television sets. To the sum add a 10- to 20 percent safety margin, then divide by 1,000 to get the kilowatt rating you should look for in a generator.

According to the Feds, a safety margin at 100% is the absolute maximum that a generator will be big enough to cope with emergency power demand while running at 50 to 60 percent load, which minimizes fuel consumption and wear and tear on the engine.

Appliance	Run watts	Surge watts
Refrigerator	100-170	2,000-2,500
1/2 hp sump pump	800-1,200	2,000-2,100
1/2 hp well pump	1,000	2,000
1/2 hp furnace fan	475	2,200
Microwave	600	800
2-cu. ft. compressor	3,400	5,800
Television set	300	N/A
15-watt light bulb	15	N/A
50-watt water heater	3,000	N/A

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# Choosing & Using Hand Planes

Few tools are better  
for smoothing and  
shaping wood

By Gayleen DeKeene



PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLER & KELLER

**T**ime was, a hand plane was an indispensable tool, used to smooth, shape, and straighten just about every piece of wood in a house. The typical carpenter lugged around a whole chestful of planes, each with its own special function. Today, power tools—routers, jointers, belt sanders, and power planers—do the same tasks much faster, relegating many old planes to the shelves of collectors.

There aren't as many types as there once were, but the hand plane is far from extinct. Because it can pare off just a thin slice of wood, no tool is better for shaving the edge of a sticking door, chamfering the corner of a board, or straightening one that is twisted or warped. That's why most carpenters still pack a hand plane or two in their toolboxes.

A decent new plane will cost \$40 and up at the hardware store. Wood-working catalogs carry a more extensive selection. But don't overlook the many fine used planes for sale at flea markets and antiques shops. These vintage tools were built to last, and there's plenty of life in them still.

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## Plane Details

### Bench Planes

Common bench planes range in length from 6 to 22 inches or more. The longer the plane, the better it will straighten an edge, because the long body bridges dips and rises in the board's surface. The blade, or iron, of a bench plane is pitched at 45 degrees, bevel side down. A cap iron stiffens the blade and directs shavings away from the mouth.



#### Jack

Before power planers, a jack plane smoothed and squared rough lumber. Called for tuning long boards and removing warps or twists. At 12 to 17 inches, it's more versatile than the larger jointer plane.



#### Smooth

Designed to flatten and smooth the face of a board, the 7- to 15-inch-long plane is ideal for leveling off high spots and for general planing. The best all-around bench plane if you have only one.

### Block Planes

The pocket-size block plane is ideal for trimming small areas, but it's too short to straighten boards. The blade is positioned bevel side up; better models have an adjustable mouth for a super-clean shaving. Block planes come in two varieties: standard, with a blade pitched at 30 degrees, and low-angle, with a 12-degree pitch.

#### Jointer

At 30 inches or longer, the jointer is also the largest bench plane and the best choice for leveling, squaring, and straightening the edges of doors or long boards.



#### Low-Angle Block Plane

The low-angle block plane shaves and planes easily and is comfortable in use. Used, making it perfect for trimming splinters, quickly shaving down the corners of milled boards, and fine-tuning interior cuts on trim.

### PLANE ALTERNATIVES

Planes are meant to be used only on wood and can be dulled by other building materials. For shaping wallboard, plastic, or wood products containing adhesives such as plywood, choose one of these alternatives.

#### Replaceable-Blade Plane

The change-edge blades are disposable, so you can use them on plywood, particleboard, and melamine-sheathed fiberboard that will knot a good plane out. They're also good if you don't want to bother with sharpening.



#### Surface-Forming Plane

The blade membrane is stretchable and flexes away from the surface, then protruding long shavings. Good for free shaping of drywall, PVC, or plastic laminates. But leaves a rough surface on wood.



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## Using a Plane



### Planing with the grain

With the working edge facing up, examine the side of the board to see which way the grain runs. (If you plan a board up toward the right and plane in that direction, if the grain runs out, try planing to the opposite direction or steering the plane diagonally as you push.)



### Planing a long edge

Apply even pressure with both hands, pushing down on the front handle and forward with the rear handle. To make the cut smoother, lean the plane slightly diagonally opposite corners of the board, or take one edge on the same edge. Periodically check the edge with a square, adjusting the blade laterally if you're off.



### Smoothing a board's face

To flatten the face of a board, measure the board's width accurately by taping the plane slightly wider so you catch the two widest boards. It's okay to plane diagonally across the grain to remove high spots. Depending on the grain, you may have to plane in several directions.



### Planing end grain

The grain on the end of a board is likely to run out of the corner where the plane leaves the wood. To correct this problem, plane a piece at a steep angle flush with the planing surface, then plane straight across the ends so the board will be square.



### Chamfering an edge

For a square or chamfer or bevel, tilt the block plane at a 45-degree angle. To make the angle consistent, rest the work above a table or piece of plywood on which you can brace your hand as it runs along the edge.

3

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## The Fine Points

### Sharpening the Iron

A plane won't cut properly unless the blade is razor sharp. Even a new plane needs to be honed before you use it. You don't need fancy tools to get an acceptable edge; a sharpening stone or sandpaper will do. The part that takes a little practice is holding the iron steady at a constant 25- to 30-degree angle without rocking it, maintaining firm, downward pressure right over the bevel (see). If all this is beyond you, buy a honing guide, which clamps the

blade at the perfect angle.)

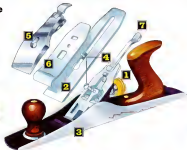
Sharpen first on a wet medium-grit water or oil stone or on 220-grit wet/dry sandpaper placed on a dead-flat surface, such as glass or marble tile. Repeat the process on a fine stone or a fine-grit sandpaper. Stroke with a circular motion until you feel a burr on the back of the edge; then flip the iron over to remove the burr by rubbing the back flat on the stone, leaving a clean, sharp edge.



Finally, keep the iron sharp when not in use by storing the plane on its side and cleaning off resin from softwoods with a rag that's been dipped in turpentine or paint thinner.

### Adjusting the Plane

Taking time to adjust a plane will save the knot or tear out the grain. Start with the iron set for a shallow cut and gradually increase the depth of cut until you can produce a continuous, wobble-free shaving. To set the cutting depth, turn the depth adjustment wheel (1) until the cutting edge of the iron (2) protrudes slightly below the sole (3). If the wheel is too tight, turn it slightly or the screw (4) that holds the lever cap (5) and cap iron (6) in place. Use the lateral adjustment lever (7) to position the cutting edge parallel with the mouth.



Beste block planes have a mouth adjustment knob to vary the width of the mouth opening. A narrow opening produces a thinner shaving and is best for fine detailing. A wider opening allows for a deeper bite and faster wood removal, but increases the chance of tearing the grain.

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## Remodeling Returns

Renovations that pay you back

By Carl Vogel



**L**ike the fundamental question facing any one who has ever embarked on a home renovation: How likely am I to get the money back when I sell my house? There's no easy answer, because what a buyer might be willing to pay depends on many factors—everything from the choice of project to the demands you see in the value of other homes in your neighborhood. But it's important to have some idea of what your improvements might be worth. If you want to invest more than you can hope to recoup because you love your house and plan to live in it for a long while, don't lose. But consider the following guidelines and you'll avoid unpleasant surprises when it comes time to put up that For Sale sign on the lawn.

### THE PROJECT

Not all remodeling projects are created equal. "People buying a house look first at kitchens and baths," says Kenneth Baker, director of the remodeling letters program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University. So while those rooms can be the most costly to redo, they're also likely to pay for themselves. Adding rooms, such as a family room or master suite, also tends to fare well as resale time. Bigger

## Rubber ducks

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*Jeanine Johnson* LIBERTY MUTUAL SENIOR SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE



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## Simple Steps to a Captivating Kitchen

Are you dreaming of a new kitchen? Whether you're in the market for a makeover or a major re-do, here are some tips to take you from start to a fantastic finish.

**1 Plan** Start with a good solid plan. Define a project with a Lower Kitchen Design Specialist who has the computer design software to turn your ideas and dreams into your ideal kitchen. Your design specialist can show you a computerized layout of your kitchen with all the elements and options that fit your wants and needs.

**2 Design** Select materials to make a statement. With hundreds of styles and finishes and the great recognized brands, you can find just what you need to fit your unique style. And you can preview your choices in Lowe's showrooms. Idea-filled sample kitchens demonstrate styles, finishes and great accessories to help you develop your dream kitchen.

**3 Shop** After you choose the right colors and coverings, let Lowe's assist you. And let Lowe's be a great place to see all the appliances, lighting, sinks and faucets to finish your new kitchen. In-store! Shop by a Lowe's store today to see a Kitchen Design Specialist and get a videotape on what to expect and prepare for as you get ready to create a captivating kitchen.

# finish

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homes command higher prices.

At the other end of the spectrum, swimming pools hardly ever return their cost, because a lot of buyers aren't willing to shell out more for a house just to acquire what they consider a maintenance burden. House offers tend to be low-returns for the same reason. Only a handful of buyers will want a recent design just for working. (Think of it this way: How high a premium would you be willing to pay for a convertible if you were never going to put the top down?)

And just because a project is expensive doesn't mean it will pay back more. Others, major improvements can yield

to lose the integrity of the house," says Robb Chavis, a real estate agent in Evansville, Illinois. "Putting a big box in the back of the house will spoil the entire appearance."

The same holds true for smaller projects, too. For example, when choosing kitchen cabinets, countertops, and flooring, aim for classic or neutral colors and styles. "Years ago, I had a client who wanted a purple kitchen, so much the people went on her lapels," says Mark Scott, a coordinator in Bethesda, Maryland. Scott argued strenuously against it, but the homeowner insisted that she was planning to stay in the house for the rest of her life. If you can't



"Are you going to do work that makes your house worth \$300,000 when it's sitting in a \$100,000 neighborhood? Don't exceed the ceiling for the neighborhood, or you won't get your money back."

— EDGAR PANDOL, REAL ESTATE AGENT

### THE STYLE

Even when your remodeling job is an upper-lag, expensive move for most buyers, it adds little return due to just your taste. "You might want a room in your house in the shape of a cat or a mouse, but can you find a buyer who wants it?" says Gopal Akhavan, director of research at the National Association of Home Builders. "You have to think in the back of your mind that you're going to have to sell someday."

If you're living in a Christian home and want to add a family room addition, for instance, keep the design in harmony with the original look and feel. This goes for the bright of the ceilings as well as the style of the windows and moldings. "You don't want

make that kind of commitment, don't expect somebody else to pay for your unique and fairly choices.

### THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Before Keweenaw and Johnson Warren spent \$42,000 to remodel the kitchen in their newly detailed 1910s ranch home, the home was probably worth about \$150,000. But their location, the Forest 1910s section of Grand Rapids, Michigan,



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give them confidence that the improvements were a smart bet. "This is a high-end neighborhood for schools. Everyone tries to get into this area," Kram says.

Even better, the Werners' home is surrounded by properties worth \$250,000 or so. That means they haven't priced themselves out of the local market, a very important consideration with any remodeling project. "Are you going to do work that makes your house worth \$350,000 when it's sitting in a \$200,000 neighborhood?" asks Israel Flores, a real estate agent in Phoenix, Arizona. "Don't exceed the ceiling line, be on the safe side, or you won't get your money back."

Just as your home's cost should be in line with your neighborhood, your improvements should be in line with the value of your home. In Florida, real estate agent Kay Raley recently discovered that a home owner spent \$50,000 on remodeling two bathrooms, complete with heated floors and Italian tile. "I said, 'I wish you had called to me first,'" she says. Because what they paid for the property and other improvements, the owners spent twice that half a million dollars in a home that Raley estimates is worth \$450,000 at most.

#### THE REGION

What part of the country you live in affects several remodeling decisions. Labor tends to be cheaper in the South than the Northeast, for example—enough so that Remodeling's annual survey shows the same master bedroom suite at \$59,431 in Louisville, Kentucky, and \$73,834 in Westchester, New York. Local factors also influence demand. Barren everywhere will probably like a new, well-aerated family room. But dwellers tell better in the North than in the South, and decide add more value as warmer climes. There are no hard-and-fast rules, but keeping an eye on local trends is a good way to ensure that your choices will appeal to house-buyers.

#### THE MARKET

Where regional differences really come into play is in the real estate market. If housing is in great demand, buyers are likely to be

willing to pay more for your improvements. Bethesda builder Scott says he bid \$300,000 recently for an expanded kitchen, breakfast room, and study—the most expensive rooms but per square foot he's ever done. But the couple got the money back when they bought an even bigger house last year. "Around the Washington, D.C., area, it's way different than elsewhere," Scott observes. "People are paid a awful lot of money to be here."

Be careful, however: Even in a strong mar-

"Be mindful of stylistic depreciation [when making renovation choices]. All the fads now are for knocking down walls and making big rooms. But ten years from now, that might not necessarily be the case."

—MARKET SURVEY, JUNE 2006  
 FOR HOUSES FLUENT, HANNOVA, JENNIFER

ket, you can over-invest. Best Western, a real estate broker in Oakland, California, has lived through the Bay Area housing boom. While prices remain high, he says, "if someone paid \$200,000 over the asking price last year, they thought when the market was real hot. So if they want to spend \$60,000 for a kitchen remodeling, they're going to have to live there a little longer to see that money back."

#### THE TIMELINE

As Werners points out, the longer you stay in your home, the more likely you are to recoup your costs. With home prices on a tear, if you own a year, your outlay will eventually be absorbed into the increase in the property's value. (Plus, you'll be able to enjoy your conveniences for those years.) A few caveats: There is no current law that says prices must go up, so don't depend too heavily on that annual bump. And remember that sometimes life can throw a curve, and you might have to put your house on the market sooner than expected.

For some projects, time also works

against you. "There's stylistic depreciation," says Harvath's Baker. "All the fads now are for knocking down walls and making big rooms. But ten years from now, that might not necessarily be the case." Kitchens and bedrooms are especially prone to looking dated, as anyone who has finished it discovering a recently green wallpaper in their dream house can tell you.

#### THE UNEXPECTED

If you think a project will pay for itself, but just barely, be prepared for something to tip the balance against you. Home renovations are full of "hidden" expenses: the costs come when a project takes longer than planned, the experts' fees for substantial raising or lowering calculations, the monthly interest payments for a home-equity loan. Not to mention the highest current interest rate you may have to pay when your new and improved house is constructed.

When all is said and done, most experts counsel against home improvement as an investment. Be smart about what you spend, sure. But a new deck isn't a mutual fund. Real estate agent Chavis suggests that once you've done your homework, make your decisions based on what you want and what you can afford. "I had a feeling when the husband had taken an early retirement, so his wife convinced him to get in a very expensive home office for \$30,000. Obviously they moved to Florida, and they didn't get the money out of that home office," Chavis says. "But she didn't care. It made her happy." ■

#### Payback by the Project

Since the mid-1990s, Remodeling magazine has done an annual analysis of most recent value for residential remodeling projects around the country. By polling real estate agents and appraisers in various regions, the editors determine both how much projects cost to complete and how much those improvements might add to a house's selling price one year later. The report is widely considered the most authoritative study of the subject. But even Josh Clary, the editor in charge of the survey, admits it only goes so far. "We provide a benchmark with our study," he says. "Owners have to be decided on an individual basis."

PROJECT	Avg. COST	Avg. RESALE VALUE ONE YEAR LATER	% RETURN
Minor bedrooms	\$21,386	\$29,250	79%
Bedroom addition	\$14,216	\$11,704	81%
Deck	\$5,887	\$4,437	75%
Master office	\$16,526	\$4,750	29%
Two-story addition	\$63,343	\$56,750	10%
Master bedroom remodel	\$14,173	\$13,250	87%
Major kitchen remodel	\$36,719	\$21,344	58%
Family room addition	\$61,726	\$29,571	76%
Master suite	\$33,273	\$47,850	74%

SOURCE: REMODELING MAGAZINE'S 2006 REMODELING IMPROVEMENTS REPORT

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## Putting Your Lawn Mower to Bed

An end-of-season tune-up keeps power lawn equipment in shape

By Scott Seibling

**G**as-powered lawn mowers and trimmers take their share of abuse during the warm months, so some care at the end of the season is vital to keeping them in good working condition. Replacing the oil, spark plugs, and air filters and applying a bit of elbow grease to grimy engines before storing mowers for the winter will ensure that they rev up with a puff of the cold new year.

Hinc, Audrey Minkling, owner of Minnola Bicycle, Fitness, and Mower in Minnola, New York, demonstrates the proper servicing on a push mower; the same process also works for other small gas-powered machines such as trimmers and snowblowers. "If you don't take an hour or two for maintenance or bring your machines to a pro for servicing," she says, "there's a big chance you'll be trash watching the grass grow come spring."



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENNETH CHEN

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### 1. Empty the Gas Tank

Unleash gas left in a mower over the winter on a test run, turning up the deck and mowing out. First, add fuel stabilizer to the tank, then run the mower to distribute it through the system. Turn the mower off and allow the engine to cool, then siphon excess gas into a clean can. (You can put this gas in your car, provided it hasn't been mixed with oil.) Periodically siphon out until it stops seeping out the engine no longer leaks and the fuel tank is empty.



### 3. Remove the Blade

To make it easier to change the blade, clean the underside of the mower. First, detach the blade by unscrewing the bolts that hold it in place. Be sure to wear thick gloves when handling the blade. With the blade in oil, take advantage of the opportunity to sharpen it (see "The Cutting Edge," page 10).



### 2. Disconnect the Spark Plug

Before continuing with the remaining maintenance steps, it's very important that you disconnect the spark plug to prevent the mower from kick-starting accidentally, which could lead to serious injury.



### 4. Drain the Oil

If the mower has a 4-cycle engine, you'll need to change the oil. (Some mowers and most lawnmowers have 2-cycle engines, in which the oil is mixed with the gas. Please see your manual and please don't mix oil with gas.) If you have a 4-cycle engine, tilt the mower on its side with the oil filter and carburetor facing up. Soak all old mechanics don't spill any. Remove the oil removal plug and slowly tilt the mower until the oil begins to drain into the pan. Replace the plug when all the oil has drained.



### 5. Clean the Undercarriage

Use a putty knife and wire brush to scrape off the grass and mud stuck on the mower deck. This prevents rust, clears the passageway to the discharge chute, and allows the aerodynamics of the deck to work as designed. With the deck cleaned, retighten the sharpened blade. Once you're finished, set the mower on its side. If the oil tank with both 20W-50 or 30-weight oil, and begin the next oil at a service station. Don't use a thicker oil, such as 10W-60.



### 6. Change the Air Filter

A dirty air filter keeps the engine from burning gas efficiently by restricting the air needed for combustion. If your mower has a paper filter, replace it with a new one, paper (do not fold) out. If it's an oil-coated sponge filter, remove it, wash it out with soap and water, allow it to dry completely, and then add a bit of clean oil to it before putting it back. Cover the cooling fins at the end of the carburetor with a screwdriver or Pop-Tart stick.



### 7. Replace the Spark Plug

Remove and replace the spark plug using a special wrench with a spark plug socket, which has a magnetic ring to protect the plug's porcelain coating. Turn it in the old spark plug in its good shape. For a couple of dollars, a new one will perform better and ensure a smooth start every spring.

## The Cutting Edge

A mower blade that has developed ridges, chips, and curls from hitting rocks and branches is no good in your lawn. A dull blade rips grass instead of cutting it cleanly, which leaves it more susceptible to disease. To sharpen a blade that's in fairly good condition, just clamp it in a vise every couple of weeks and run a metal file along the cutting edge, making sure to follow the angle of the factory bevel. (Always disconnect the spark-plug wire before taking off the blade or doing any mower maintenance.)

If the blade is badly damaged, it needs to be sharpened on a bench grinder or sent to be replaced. A bench shop can sharpen it for you or tell you when it's ready for the trash bin. But if you have your own grinder, it's easy to do the sharpening yourself.

Begin by running the blade back and forth perpendicular to the spinning wheel to grind out ridges. This will give you a blunt but straight edge. Then hold the blade—supported by the rest plate—at the angle of the existing bevel and grind the length of the blade until you get a sharp edge.

Finally, check to make sure the blade is balanced. An off-balance blade can damage the mower. It's easy with a plastic balancer, available at lawn equipment shops or a home center for just a few dollars. Bend the blade on the balancer. If one side dips down, then you need to grind a bit of steel from that end (just from the cutting edge) to lighten it. Once the blade is balanced, test it back on the mower and you'll be ready to attack the big grass.



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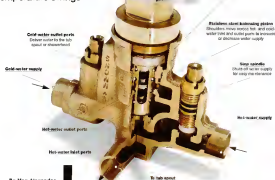
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## Stop the Shock

Pressure-balancing valves prevent sudden temperature swings



By Max Alexander

It's happened to everyone who showered: Elsewhere in the house, a toilet is flushed, a faucet is opened, or the washing machine kicks on, and the once-temperate water coming from the showerhead suddenly gets cold enough to make you jump or so hot you want to scream. A simple device called a pressure-balancing shower valve can help.

By adjusting to pressure changes in water coming through the hot and cold supply lines, a piston in the valve automatically opens or shuts small inlet ports to maintain a balance in pressure, which in turn keeps the water flowing at an ambient temperature. "It reacts instantaneously," says Bill Tinsley, marketing manager of Symmons Industries, whose founder invented the prototype in 1938.

Pressure-balancing valves are now required in new residences and construction in most states, depending on local plumbing codes. In addition to piston valves like the one shown above, some pressure valves use a whisklike diaphragm to trigger pistons that cover the hot- or cold-water ports. Both are priced at around \$70, and including installation, which is a bigger issue with an existing shower. It involves cutting through the wall behind the shower, removing the old valve, and soldering on the new one. But it's a prospect that The Old House plumbing and lining experts Richard Latheway strongly recommends. "There's no downside," he says. "One of these valves will really keep you out of hot water. Or cold, as the case may be."

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES WORNELL



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# B.Y.O.B.—BUILD YOUR OWN BAR

WHEN IT COMES TO ENTERTAINING AT HOME, NOTHING BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER LIKE A

BAR. HOME BARS HAVE BECOME A POPULAR REMODELING PROJECT, ACCORDING TO

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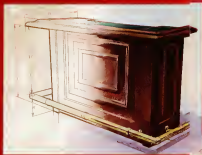
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It's easy to see why. Besides providing a beverage center away from the kitchen, bars facilitate the transition between kitchen, dining room and family room to guest floor plans. That means you can forget about that basement bar room with the most sign—this latest bar designs are attractive enough to hide under steps.

Bars make it easy to entertain because they give guests a comfortable place to sit, they also don't create out of the kitchen when you're trying to cook. "People love to hang out around a bar," says Steve Byrnes, a national remodeling maker of custom home bars. "Wherever you put a bar, that's where they'll go." And when the cocktail hour is over, a bar near the dining room makes a great "staging area" for serving dishes. It's also a good place for a built-in breakfast nook.

For night owls, find yourself looking right at the bar, the latest appliances are familiar home bars into kitchen, kitchen, under-counter wine coolers, built-in refrigerators, drawers and modular dishwashers and even let bartenders from everywhere—including the kitchen sink—into a small space. Manufacturers are responding to the home-bar trend with appliances that are easily hidden behind panel cabinets to the bar blends in with the rest of the home's furnishings.

Unless you're planning to build your own bar, look for a pro with experience in specialty remodeling. He or she will know about the latest appliances and materials, as well as the best place to put your bar. Most bars are small enough to be easily slipped in, so you don't necessarily need to have the bar built into your home.



"PEOPLE LOVE TO HANG OUT AROUND A BAR. WHEREVER YOU PUT A BAR, THAT'S WHERE THEY'LL GO."

—Steve Byrnes

You'll definitely need some sturdy friends to celebrate your new addition. As bar is complete with the crystal bar, it's time to give a glass of champagne to the bar. It's time to toast your hard work.

## FIRST ROUND

If you plan to have a sink or dishwasher as part of your bar, you'll need to consider the location of existing plumbing lines for future to pay a hefty premium to the plumber. But if the best place for your bar is nowhere near the plumbing, consider doing without a sink, you can always employ under-cabinet sinks into a bar top under the counter. When figuring the layout, allow 30-35 inches of floor space between the bar and any back wall or cabinet. That's enough for someone to comfortably move about. Remember that most under-counter refrigerators are 24 inches deep—so if you want a fridge in a cabinet behind the bar, you'll need two more feet of space off the wall. Designers generally say that bars made of solid wood are the least likely to go out of style. Hardwoods like mahogany, cherry and maple are fine, but oak is popular in part for its solid-hard surface and durability.

## ADDING TO THE MIX

The most important bar appliance is a sink/appliance or wine cooler. Glass-fronted models are popular for their sleek look and convenience—you can tell at a glance if they need re-stocking—but models that accept custom wood panels matching the cabinetry are also popular. Bar sinks tend to be metal and undermounted for easy cleaning, with copper being the luxury pick. Another mid-luxury is a stainless dishwasher. Unlike conventional dishwashers, these no-cold dish drawers are powered by solar, brushless DC motors, making them extremely quiet (a big plus in living areas) and much more compact. Finally, consider a built-in bar top, which adds comfort and protects the wooden baseboard of the bar. These rolls should never be discarded, as the rolling will eventually roll off leaving holes in the base. Consider the choice of a built-in bar top as a luxury pick. See 1002, which expert Byrnes says.

## TOP IT OFF, BARTENDER

Your choice of counter will do more to define the look and feel of your bar than any other component. The most economical bar-top option is a laminate material, which offers durability and hundreds of color choices. Solid

wood is more traditional, but it must be kept dry and resins can be (prevent stains). Byrnes says wooden bar-tops with five or six coats of urethane. Stone surfaces like granite or slate make the most elegant bar-tops, but they are expensive. Finally, metal bar-tops (typically brass or cast) make old-time options or futuristic looks—but be prepared for lots of maintenance, because they need frequent polishing.



## WHERE TO GO

Here are a few hot sources to get you going on building and updating a home bar.

### Bars by Byrnes

Kevin Byrnes makes custom bars at his shop in Hewlett, NY to show anywhere. He can also advise you on the best location for your bar, as well as styles and appliances to consider. This guy knows bars. You can view many of his bar designs on his website, [www.barsbybyrnes.com](http://www.barsbybyrnes.com). Tel 845-638-8233

### Quality Bars

Bars look a lot of use—over time—so they need to be strong. Award-winning models that are glued and nailed together, look for dovetail joints, reinforced with steel brackets. In general, more expensive models have better quality, which are always more comfortable. Rick Lennette Associates is a representative for quality bar-top manufacturers, and they also sell to consumers. Call 800-348-7636

### Cooper Sinks

Vintage bars and pedestals often had sides made of copper. The Sink Works makes custom handcrafted copper sinks, from a 200-year-old stone farmhouse in Pennsylvania. See their website at [www.sinkworks.com](http://www.sinkworks.com), or call 877-740-5957.

### Vintage Bars

As an alternative to building a bar is buying a vintage bar and refurbishing it with modern appliances. Old bars were typically constructed of quarter-sawn oak and loaded mahogany inlaid. elaborate architectural carvings and inlays of oaks and other fine materials. Old Wood Bars is a Manhattan-based company that's been restoring and selling bars for 25 years. Company owner Steve Spelman says buyers of old bars need to be tolerant of flaws like cosmetic blemishes and dents. "After all, it is a bar," he says. See more at [www.oldwoodbars.com](http://www.oldwoodbars.com) or call 212-631-0600.

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## Yanking Your Tank

Got an underground oil tank? Get rid of it now to avoid problems later

By Joe Carter

W

hen I bought my house, in 1991, it came with one feature of questionable value: a 300-gallon underground oil tank that held the fuel for my boat and hot water. Though I had the thing tested and it was deemed sound, no one knew how long it had been there. So for seven years I burned and burned about pulling it out, all the while storing my boat fuel. Then the steel contractor was looking, spreading a loose phone under my yard and into my neighbor's water supply—a scenario that would cost me \$1,000, \$10,000, \$20,000 or more to clean up. An architect buddy made the decision for me. The tank was in the way of a planned living room expansion, it had to go.

Across the United States, more than 1 million oil tanks lie buried under front, back, and side yards, out of sight but no longer out of mind. Harvest these wisely in the 1990s



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE EDWARDS





A fuelless life in empty 300-gallon oil tank from a yard in Connecticut. Staff here speculate that someone at tank removed a newspaper official must be too hard to ensure that no one else is taken. A few more shot with the town of Kew-Forest keeps a sharp eye on the proceedings.

But on one known precisely how many tanks left. The federal Environmental Protection Agency doesn't regulate residential oil tanks, and few states have requirements for reporting tank pulls or spills.

That state may sound a little less, but the states recognize that a buried oil tank becomes very visible when a house changes hands. "Real estate transactions require full and full disclosure, so a tank can't be hidden," says Jerry O'Callahan of the Indiana Department of Environmental Protection. And since nobody wants to be indicted as doing with a potential time bomb on their property, buyers, banks, and insurance companies are motivating every tank owner to take action. "Some insurers won't even write a new homeowners policy if there's an oil tank on the property," says Erik Lanning, a broker with George J. Smith Insurance in Milford, Connecticut.

Still, it's not clear why many people choose to sit on their buried tanks. Removal costs are steep—according to Lanning, about \$2,000 on average to pull the tank and fill the hole, plus the cost of installing a new, aboveground tank. And that's if the tank comes up sound. If it has leaked, cleanup regulations kick in and costs soar. The Zurich Financial Services Group, an insurer that sells clean-up coverage in its eastern states, reports payouts mostly in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range. Because standards differ from state to state, costs may vary widely. In New Hampshire, for instance, cleanup averages \$11,000, while in Connecticut it's around \$5,000, cleanup on those state's departments of environmental protection.

Such large sums effectively keep people from taking action—"It's a huge enough—a handful of cases have set up funds to help raise the financial pain of tank removal. And I pulled my tank last year, it could have ended Connecticut's oil-tank amnesty program, which paid up to \$50,000 in cleanup costs (even if any oil had polluted the groundwater or the creek across the street). The state ended the program in 2001, but California, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and New Jersey now use in-state homeowners facing expensive cleanup. The quickest way to find out what your state needs is to call your department of environmental protection, or go to [www.epa.gov/epaospl](http://www.epa.gov/epaospl) and click on your state.

Standard homeowners policies won't cover the cost of cleaning up, unless the spill leaks a neighboring property. "Some policies specifically exclude anything having to do with a tank," says

and '60s, the tanks started to attract attention in the late 1990s, when every began to release flow contents into the ground. The issue is simple: Steel tanks buried by dump dirt and at-risk contamination, corrosion sets away unobscured at the steel and eventually, inevitably, the tank sprays a leak. Once this happens, tons of contaminated earth might have to be loaded away and replaced and loaded with might have to be ending as new locations. And the homeowners foot the bill.

#### PLAYING THE GOOD

Just because tanks can leak doesn't mean they all do. "We see contamination in around 15 percent of oil tanks," says Will Schriever, a chronology scientist with Snodgrass & Narwell, Connecticut, which tests thousands of tanks a year. Based on national reports by tank-removal contractors, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection estimates that about one in five is a leak.

### Decommissioning a Tank in the Ground

Pulling out an old tank is not the only way to rid yourself of old tank metal. If a tank proves the tank is sound, it can be left in place and given an "in-ground decommissioning." Essentially, the tank is disconnected from the house, cleaned, filled with gravel, sand, foam, or concrete (to prevent a future cave-in), and left in place to disintegrate.

Doing the in-ground route might seem

simpler and therefore cheaper, but that's not necessarily true. Tanks run from \$400 to \$500; some states even demand multiple tests before they'll green-light the procedure (see "Testing for Leaks," page 10).

There could also be complications down the road. The presence of a tank—much less that's been properly decommissioned—may be a red flag to future real estate

transactions. "Make sure the contractor doing the work is licensed and carries its writing that your tank was decommissioned according to state and local requirements." And if you ever decide to remove a decommissioned tank that's been filled with anything but foam, the tank will be much more difficult—and costly—than if the tank were empty



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## HOMEOWNER'S HANDBOOK

STEP-BY-STEP PROJECT SERIES



Almost every sink is installed at least once. Richard Trethewey installed this kitchen sink and found it with little more than a common's work.

## Installing a Kitchen Sink

with This Old House plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey

BY JEFFERSON KOLLE PHOTOGRAPHS BY KELLER & KELLER

home sweet, snug, secure, cozy safe, home



HOME SAFETY

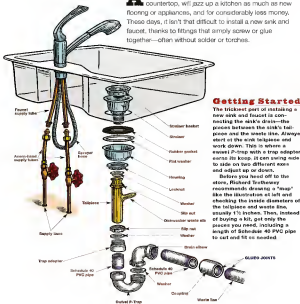
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**ACE.**

# Anatomy

ILLUSTRATION BY GREGORY KENEC

**A** shiny new sink, along with a new faucet and countertop, will jazz up a kitchen as much as new flooring or appliances, and for considerably less money. These days, it isn't that difficult to install a new sink and faucet, thanks to fittings that simply screw or glue together—often without solder or torches.



## Getting Started

The trickiest part of installing a new sink and faucet is connecting the sink's drain—the piece between the sink's tailpiece and the waste line. Always start at the sink tailpiece and work down. This is where a swivel P-trap with a trap adapter comes in handy. It can swing side to side on two different axes and adjust up or down.

Before you head off to the store, Richard Teatheyway recommends drawing a "map" like the illustration at left and checking the inside diameters of the tailpiece and waste line, usually 1½ inches. Then, instead of buying a kit, get only the pieces you need, including a length of Schedule 40 PVC pipe to cut and fit as needed.

# Step by Step



**1**

## Lay out sink location

- Mark the counter's back edge where the sink will be centered within its island. If there is a window sill—sufficient clearance from the cabinet's side wall—mark its center on the back edge of the counter instead.
- If sink has a cut-out template, align its centerline with the one on the counter. Place its back edge 1½ inches from and parallel to the back of the counter. Trace around it. Then go to Step 2.
- If there's no template, use 2-inch-wide tape to outline the sink location. Apply it on the sink's main side (generally with tail to the middle of two legs).
- Mark the center of the sink's back lip.
- Lay the sink upside down on the counter. Line up the mark on the sink with the one on the counter.
- Adjust sink to leave at least 1½ inches between its back edge and the backsplash. Make sure the sink is parallel to the front counter edge.
- Trace around the sink, then remove it.
- Measure the width of the sink lip. Subtract ½ inch and mark this line's outline by the trace.
- To make the cut-out line, connect the marks with a straightedge on all sides (LEFT). Round off the corners to approximate the radius of the sink's corners.

**4**

## Attach strainer

- With the sink still upside down, pack a thick roll of plumber's putty under the strainer's lip and push it up through the sink's drain hole (arrow).
- Slip gasket, washer and heating of your strainer (see one) onto the strainer and against the underside of sink. Set gasket (not compound) on its exposed rim.
- Tighten locknut as desired by hand, tighten with pliers while holding the strainer in place.
- Fit gaskets on side-drain tailpiece and align it to the strainer with its lip up. Tighten nut by hand while holding strainer.

**5**

## Set sink; connect water supply

- Remove traps, piping toward center of hole.
- With sink still upside down, square a board of sufficient width on the underside of the sink's lip.
- Turn sink upright and set into sink hole.
- Check that front of sink is parallel with front edge of counter top. Adjust if necessary.
- Connect faucet to shut-off valves using reversed supply tubes or braided stainless steel hoses.
- Attach sprayer hose to faucet's threaded tailpiece.



# Tools



- 1 PVC primer and cement
- 2 Plumber's putty
- 3 Tubing cutters
- 4 Safety glasses
- 5 Square with centerline-cutting blade
- 6 4-lock short or monkey tape
- 7 Drill with spade bit
- 8 Screwdriver
- 9 Mechatron's plate
- 10 Adjustable wrench

## ALSO NEEDED

- Tape measure
- Hacksaw for cutting PVC pipe
- Utility knife or pen-knife, for removing burrs on PVC pipe ends
- Pipe-joint compound, for sealing threaded metal joints
- Straightedge, for marking sink cutout

"I always attach the faucet, strainer, and tailpiece to the sink before dropping it in; it beats working on my back inside a dark, cramped cabinet."

— FICHARD TRETHEWEY

## Sizing Up a Sink

**T**here are hundreds of kitchen sink styles and configurations made in half a dozen different materials. But the specifications most critical to installation are size, mounting type, and the number of holes in the deck for the faucet and accessories.

**SIZE:** When buying a new sink for an existing kitchen, first measure the inside distance between the sidewalls of the base cabinet that will hold it. That distance determines a sink's maximum **LENGTH**—its side-to-side measurement. A sink's **WIDTH**—the front-to-back measurement—is a little easier. Most sinks are 22 inches wide, to fit a standard 26-inch countertop.

**MOUNTING TYPE:** A **SELF-INSTALLING** cast-iron or plastic composite sink (like the one illustrated here) is the easiest to install, since it has a lip that rests on the counter. Stainless steel sinks can also be self-installing, but they need clips on the underside of the counter to hold them in place. **UNDERMOUNT** sinks are more difficult to install and require a water-tight impervious countertop—like stone or solid surfacing.

**HOLE(S):** This one is simple. Just count the number of holes required to mount your faucet. Then add all the accessories you want to include, such as a separate sprayer, filtered water spout, or soap dispenser.



## 2 Cut sink opening

- With a bit that's wider than the jig saw blade, drill a hole inside the rectangle at each corner of the cut-out line.
- Lower a jig saw blade into a front hole and cut along the cut-out line to back hole (above). Repeat on other side.
- Lay a scrap of wood a few inches longer than the cutout across the sink area. Saw through the scrap and into the cut-out to prevent a front kick-in or kicking back blade.
- Cut along front and back cut-out lines. Remove cut-out.
- Check fit of sink in hole; trim with jig saw if necessary.



## 3 Install faucet

- Set sink upside down on a padded surface or counter.
- Feed the faucet's supply tubing and tailpiece through the gasket that seals faucet to top of sink and then up through the hole (or holes) in sink.
- Screw the mounting nuts and washers to the underside of the sink deck (above).
- Make sure the faucet cutaway is full up across the sink. Tighten mounting nuts.



## 6 Connect drain

- Assemble trap adapter on sink-side tailpiece.
- Cut and dry-fit lengths of PVC pipe to connect the trap adapter to the trap and the drain scope to the waste line. Insert the trap or strain it on the tailpiece to fine-tune the pipe's lengths and alignment. Take the drain (above) apart.
- Clean off the cut ends with a utility knife. Coat them and their mating pieces with PVC primer. Let dry.
- Insert PVC cement on both ends (above) (above). Immediately push pieces together. Hold for 30 seconds.
- Reassemble and hand-tighten all threaded connections.



## 7 Attach dishwasher drain; tidy up

- At each dishwasher drain line to the waste side of the hub place. Tighten (above) clamp (above).
- Remove excess putty from lip of sink.
- Remove scissor from faucet and run water. Look for leaks at all connections along the supply and drain lines.
- In case of leaks, tighten nuts by one-eight turn until leak stops.
- Make sure the sink front is parallel to counter. Fill sink with water to hold it tight overnight as the caulk sets.

## LETTER FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

### Of Pipes and Progress

By Richard Trethewey

**T**his year, our family business, Trethewey Brothers, celebrated a milestone 100 years in the plumbing business. We hosted a huge party with family, friends, employees past and present, suppliers, and even our competitors joining in. We talked a lot about how much things have changed in the world of plumbing and heating over the century.

Thinking about this milestone made me realize what a short time it has been that we've had the modern conveniences that we take so much for granted. Up until the late 1800s, if you wanted hot water you heated it on the kitchen stove. Weaving the building meant loading more wood or coal into the fireplace. And if someone called, you answered with a visit to the outdoors.

In 1901, my great grandfather Harry and his brother William, two Boston firefighters who'd moved down from Nova Scotia, decided to get into the "new thing" called plumbing. Back then, the idea of water piped directly into the house instead of pumped or gathered from a well was such a marvel that the plumber was considered a magician. He would travel by omnibus and arrive dressed in his crisp white shirt and bow tie, his only job to take measurements and close the deal. Then his co-workers, really—would show up a day or two later to do the dirty work.

From us plumbers came into water ran, the designs were rather limited. Fixtures were not mass-produced in every conceivable color and style the way they are today. Sinks and commodes were brass when porcelain, and fixtures were simple chrome designs. If my great-grandfather and his brother ordered more than six toilets at once, the manufacturer would mold their company name right into the casting!

What a world of comfort we have now. In just 100 years we've managed to deliver sanitary hot and cold water at every tap, showers that spray at the perfect temperature, shower control to within half a degree of accuracy, air-conditioning, and boilers that burn so clean they hardly need cleaning. In the next few decades, we'll see further advances, easily aided as consumers our natural resources. We already have some of the technology—in solar-powered equipment and in geothermal heat pumps, which take the warmth right out of the ground.

What strikes me as so amazing is that mankind has been on this planet for thousands and thousands of years and only in the past 100 or so have we raised our level of comfort and convenience to my appreciable level. Most of that came with the plumber.

My great-grandfather is looking insured every day. ■



Richard Trethewey, T.O.H. plumbing and heating expert, is amazed at how much the plumbing tools he's changed since his family started their business 100 years ago.

#### coming next issue

**November:** On sale October 18

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Belonging exterior paint of the TV project house

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**This Old House TV Project**  
 [Winchester, Massachusetts]

PHOTOGRAPH BY BELLER & KELLER



# Working it out

By Jefferson Koile

"We're not going to change much up here at all," says homeowner Kim Whittemore, pointing to the living and dining rooms at the front of her 1892 Colonial Revival in Winchester, Massachusetts. But as she and her husband, Bruce Lessner, navigate a cramped rear hallway and a maze of doorways to enter what once was the bulbous kitchen, it becomes clear that they won't say the same about the back rooms. The rear wall of the house is gone, recently removed by *This Old House* general contractor Tom Giles and his crew, and it's wide open to the backyard. "This is where all the action is taking place," says Bruce, and the whine of circular saws and the rasp of plywood dropping onto the joists of a small kitchen addition.

And so begins the work on another *This Old House* television project. After give and take between planning, board and checkbook, the plans—by local architect David Shring—are finished. Along with the new end-in kitchen and redesigned rear entry, the master suite will be reconfigured to enlarge the bath. Plans call for a media room and a wine cellar in the basement and an office and a cedar closet in the attic. But for the most part—and certainly with a view to the front facade—the house's exterior will appear unchanged when the crew wraps up just before Christmas. "Since the first time we saw the house," says Kim, "our thoughts have been not about what we want to change but rather about how much we want to keep if the same."

**A look  
at the  
final plans  
for the  
Winchester  
project house**

*As the work on the kitchen adds to the bulk of the house job going, homeowners Bruce Lessner (in the red shirt) and Kim Whittemore discuss the rest of the final plans with TCH general contractor Tom Giles.*





**This Old House TV Project**  
Winstchester, Massachusetts



**An outdried kitchen grows into a gathering spot**



The 1960s kitchen is rarely in need of a better design and layout.

"The back half of the ground floor felt like some kind of strange carnival funhouse," says Kim. "So doors led to a roof closet, half bath, basement, closed-off back porch, back stairs, and, finally, kitchen. It was a confusing disaster." Behind the kitchen were more doors—to another hall and to the backyard. "We wanted to clear up the confusion and create a larger kitchen, always the gathering place in our house," says Kim.

Stirling's design opens up the floor plan, which requires removing the back stairs as high as the second floor (they will remain to the attic). The new kitchen, larger by 100 square feet, will feature a T-foot island and a windows breakfast nook. By moving a wall, Kim and Bruce will be able to keep a party and a powder room on the first floor.

Once reachable only from the front hall, the living room will now be accessible directly from the kitchen as well. "It greatly improves the flow," says Stirling, who added a second set of French doors from the living room to the sunroom. That space will lose leaky alcove windows in favor of double-hung units, turning it into a true four-season room. "Then it will really seem like an extension of the living room," says Stirling.

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**



A key lock bedroom makes way for a dressing room and master bath.



**A cluster of rooms becomes the master bedroom suite**

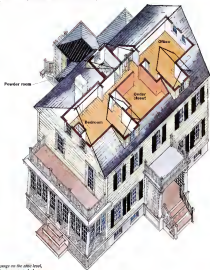
The majority of the work on the second floor will be done in the master suite. A small star bedroom and the old master bedroom will be reconfigured into a larger bath and a dressing area with lots of closets. "Losing the bedroom was not a big concern for Bruce and Kim," says Stirling. "There will still be three left on this floor." By blocking off the back hall, the couple will gain two linen closets, one for each bedroom.

From the master bedroom, a single exterior door will lead to a deck above the sunroom. "In the morning, we can look out over the gardens," says Kim. "What a treat."



**This Old House TV Project**  
(Worcester, Massachusetts)

attic



This closet, the only storage on the attic level, will be lined with cedar to protect clothes.



#### The old servants' rooms get a face-lift

In the original house, the attic was most likely for servants. "The 1935 city directory listed Julie Traiser, a maid, age 26, living in the house," says Kim. Only minor changes are in store for this level. Aside from an update for the utilities and insulation, one room will remain a bedroom, while the other will become Kim's office. "The large central closet will be lined with cedar for clothes storage. The powder," says Kim, "we're moving here from Atlanta, and we'll be using it for our new wardrobe."

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# This Old House TV Project [Worcester, Massachusetts]



Mechanics

## Finished spaces take over an undersized level

The basement—once the domain of coal bin and laundry room—will do double duty as both utility area and a place to watch movies and store live albums. New partitions will create an exercise room, a media room, and a wine cellar and an eking out-of-place drop sink will anchor a laundry area with new counters, washer, and dryer. One small mechanical room will house the boiler, and another will hold the electronics and home network.

To accommodate the arrangement, the basement stairs will be relocated to the center of the house. (Here you admire, however, about smiling an outside staircase directly into the underground level. "You ever come in here it's like it's the sun with those golden rays!" he says. "The first thing they do is to take it'll be great to have a place for our little wet dogs to dry off.")



The large drop sink will anchor the first part of an all-new laundry area.

## Colonial Revival: an American Hodgepodge

ask any kid in America to draw a picture of a house and chances are she'll come up with something that looks like the Winchester project at home. In fact, the Colonial Revival style is so ubiquitous in the American landscape that its symmetrical facade with sheltered windows and a colonnaded portico has become the iconic representation of the American home.



That was the goal of the style when it was first conceived in the 1880s to create something that closely read as American. Born out of the primitive fervor and nostalgia of the 1879 American Centennial, the style's roots in a bit of a romance. Colonial Revival designers hark back to house forms of both the pre- and post-Revolutionary periods. English and Dutch colonial from the 17th and 18th centuries, and Federal and, particularly, Georgian of the early 18th century.

Colonial Revival style at its broadest takes many forms. They range from the pristine manse of the late 18th century to the more relaxed profiles that popped up through the first half of the 20th century. A hodgepodge in even its most

recognizable form, it borrows a number of its elements from its predecessors, including portico overhangs, baylights, bay windows, side lights, gables and gambrel roofs, and millwork such as shingles. Often the ex-fences are enlarged, exaggerated, and grouped in ways they never would have been on the original houses they mimic.

Some architectural historians believe that Colonial Revival was a backlash against more ornate Victorian-era styles, such as Italianate or Gothic Revival. Whatever the impetus, in the recent proliferation of neo-Colonial McMansions in our suburban suburban sprawl, this frontier style remains abundant in the American psyche.

—Alexandra Roman

### For more information:

For more on the Colonial Revival style and on the Winchester renovation, including real-time images of the work in progress, visit [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com) or go to America Online, keyword: This Old House and click on "The Winchester Project."

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FOR A BETTER WORLD



**A young couple  
build an  
addition with  
hands-on help  
from their kin**

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

THE 1920S COTTAGE, SHARED BY A CENTURY-OLD COUPLE, was perfect for newbloods. So thought John and Nancy Ellis, who bought the one-story 1,349-square-foot dwelling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, from her sister for "a good little deal," John says with a smile. Then Nancy, 31, a first-grade schoolteacher, and John, 32, an environmental biologist, began musing about having a family. Nancy realized there was no decent place to put a crib. Suddenly the house felt cramped, so the couple decided to build an addition on the back.

Initially, Nancy and John dreamed small: a 300- to 400-square-foot addition on the back that would stay within their \$10,000 budget and give them a master bedroom, bathroom, and walk-in closet. But Nancy hated giving up that much of her yard. In the course of dreaming, they shared the dilemma with family.

John's uncle, David Ellis, a retired architect and contractor, was first to respond. He came up with a bigger, bolder vision: five called for adding 1,700 square feet—roughly doubling the size of the house. "I thought it made sense for them to remodel once and get all they'd need for the future. That meant pushing out toward the street and building a new second floor," Uncle David says. Although the budget blossomed into \$40,000 to \$55,000, Nancy and John nervously decided to go for it.

That's when the rest of the family jumped in. In an extraordinary outpouring of labor and love, family members and friends pitched in to help keep costs low. Uncle David drew up the plans, gratis. They asked John's father, Randy Ellis, who owns a prefabricated-furniture business, to be co-contractor along with John. Nancy's father, Sanford Louane, and her brother,



**BEFORE** The modest bungalow was big enough for the newbloods, but its roomy layout and tiny rear porch accommodated a growing family. **AFTER** Pooling their construction talent, family and friends pitched in to build an addition that doubled the size of John and Nancy Ellis's house. The price for the couple (\$40,000 to \$55,000), paid in repetitive cash even donations and a master bedroom and nursery upstairs.

By Mimi Reed  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHIPPER WATERS  
STYLING BY ASHLEY GORDON



A comfortable new great room features a grand oak hutch (bottom left) and flows into a formal dining room. Part of the old living room became an entry foyer (top left). The second-floor addition yielded a spacious master bedroom (top right). As part of the interior renovation, hanging cabinets were removed between the kitchen and original dining room. The remodeled kitchen (bottom left) now opens onto a new breakfast room (bottom right) with French doors leading to a deck overlooking the backyard. Remixed colors make a strong impression.



Steady, was enlisted for their electrical skills. All three sons of Elba aided in their own interior-design businesses, and all agreed to help with flooring, carpentry, kitchen cabinets, paint colors, and furnishings. "We paid everyone in labor," Nancy laughs.

In April 2001, construction commenced. Consulting their foreman in the two smaller bedrooms, Nancy and John charged to the remaining bedroom, worked full-time jobs, and came home in the evening to mounds of drywall dust and pyramids of 2x4s blocking the driveway. "After work, friends and family would show up to help," says John. "It taught me to cherish family even more than I did before."

Sometimes, however, tensions sprang from the intense relationships of the workforce. "Both our dads are real workaholics and like to have things done their way," John says. "And there were teenage dynamics, like my uncle, the architect, working with my friend, the builder—the big brother telling the little brother what to do. It's amazing that everyone in the family is still speaking and that we're still married."

Other problems were more tangible. Early in the construction, foundations were dug for the piers that would support the addition, and the holes were cleaned with a jackhammer. Although Taroni Rapp

weather had been bone dry for weeks, the day before the concrete was scheduled a monsoon blew through, saving every thing in it. It also washed away the termites' chemicals, which are nearly as necessary to Louisiana life as air and water. "My dad, once-in-a-lifetime house, and I spent most of the night mucking the holes out and re-mucking them," John remembers.

This was only the start of Nancy and John's daily scrambling, in preparation for the next day's assaults. "It was miserable for my father, Randy, as call and say, 'Stash and such in going to happen tomorrow and you have to do this tonight,'" John says. On one such occasion, Nancy recalls, Randy told them to cut out the kitchen sink before the plumbers came. "John and I didn't have a clue how, but we looked at one another and said, 'Just do it!'"

When the finish work started, fresh challenges presented themselves, like matching the height of floors and ceilings in the old part of the house with those in the addition. Where the spacious new living room joins the older nest—now a foyer and formal dining room—new oak flooring had to be tied in with a barnished old 1930s oak floor. John and his uncle Richard seamlessly wore the flooring together, pulling out some old boards and laying others. For a unifying effect, they stripped the old flooring and stained everything a pale honey color.

Though they did much of the work themselves, the couple did hire out some of the framing, plumbing, electrical, and dry-wall in the construction business. Because John's father has so many friends in the construction business, he was able to call in a life-long worth of favors, and there was often a discount for the work at Nancy and John's house.

The result is a home with not only twice the square footage but more polish and pizzazz than Nancy and John had ever dreamed possible. Upstairs, their spacious master bedroom has its own elegant fireplace and French doors that open onto a balcony over the front lawn. The master bathroom, a generous 10 by 16 feet, features granite-topped vanities, a stand-up shower, and a jacuzzi. For now, a second new bedroom is Nancy's head room, where she makes the pretty blue paper for all her new lace-curtain. Downstairs, the new, light-filled kitchen and breakfast room are joined by a new guest room, which is used primarily for entertaining. In the bargain, the couple also got a small entry room for the weather and dryer, previously stored in the kitchen. "My favorite change is the openness," John says.

Last spring, the house was officially finished, and Nancy and John invited everyone who'd helped them to a good ol'



Where once were only simple back steps, the Ellises now enjoy their backyard garden from the vantage point of a new covered deck.

Louisiana housewarming party. John baked up 300 pounds of crawfish, and Nancy went to the liquor store, where the cashier, by now, didn't bother to raise an eyebrow at her order. Sixty-one people showed up to feast and examine the fruits of their labors. As often as Nancy thanked people, it wasn't enough, she says. "I'll owe them for the rest of my life." ♦

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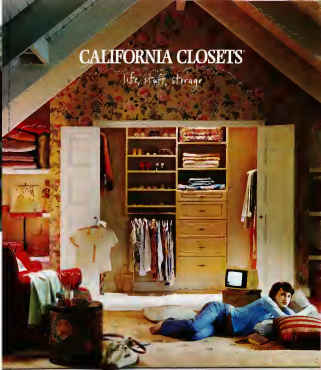
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 6. Friday, 11/15/02, the selected "Dream Kitchen" will be announced on "Today"  
 7. If you are selected, "Dream Kitchen" work begins in late December. See page 165 for complete rules



Bright green Irish moss (*Thymus serpyllifolius*) blankets the area in and around a series of stepping stones. OPPOSITE: All of the ground-cover plants in this group tolerate light shade and would look at home on a wooded hill.

# ground COVERS

By Lyne Deane

Call them outwardly mobile. Ground-cover plants ramble, clump, and colonize as they blanket the earth with greenery. They range from diminutive ground huggers that grow just a few inches tall to sprawling shrubs that reach several feet high. But it's their spreading nature—along with an uncommon tenacity and versatility—that makes these plants valuable problem solvers in the landscape. Frequently planted where

PHOTO: JILL K. HARRIS; GARDEN DESIGN: JENNIFER HARRIS



COMMON PERIWINKLE



BABY'S BREATH



RUSSIAN SAGE



RAY-STARTED FERN





soil grass is not present, they are also used in shady areas, around trees with surface roots, and in the narrow spaces between stepping stones. Placed on slopes, they can help control erosion. Some will tolerate drought, while others thrive in soggy soil. As they spread they also form a dense mat that effectively crowds out weeds. Not just law experts but

TOH landscape contractor Roger Cook used a rotary tillage machine to break the soil. Before planting, he added the wood-chip mulch and topped it with mulch of switch grass.

problem areas, though, ground covers can dress up a landscape, too. With its delicate foliage that may also hold colorful flowers or striking berries, they offer myriad possibilities for changing seasonal displays.

When The Old House landscape contractor Roger Cook and landscape architect Patrick Chase teamed up on a landscape redesign in Bewdley, Massachusetts, they found shade-tolerant ground covers were just the right solution for a sloping front yard that receives filtered light through a canopy of mature oaks. The homeowners were eager to clear the beds down and try anything to save the money. So they, ground covers are an attractive alternative and, once established, will be easy to maintain this year. "And the quiet neutral mix of the grass and covers blends in with the wooded lot in the neighborhood," says Chase.

#### MAKING THE PLAN

Chase, who has offices in both Boston and New Haven, Maine, combined woody evergreen ground covers with deciduous ones that provide the season with colorful foliage and flowers. "Low-growing evergreens like dwarf juniper and Korean rhododendron are important structural bones in the ground cover garden. They create sweeping circles of greenery over the lawn," he says. "But to have all evergreens would be boring." So he added seasonal wonders. The low shrub *Veronica monspeliensis*, for example, has showy white flower clusters for two to three weeks in early summer, followed by purple-red foliage in fall.

To create a natural look in this woodland setting, Chase used 15 different ground covers, mixing together dozens of each type for a complex but all plants used in this plan are "Woodland Ground Covers," appear in "The Ground Cover" plan in large, regular drifts," he says, "rather than in formal order or squares." By placing groups of completely different plants side to side, he created a distinctly varied pattern. "The plants create a changing mosaic of colors that discovers and enhances the slope, so that descending from plants closer to the lower of the house," says Roger Cook.

#### PREPARING THE SITE

To help the young plants take root and spread quickly, Roger and his crew spent a day prepping the planting area. They began by removing the top 3 to 4 inches of grass and soil, using a rototiller. "A rototiller is thorough and efficient, and homeowners can easily rent the machine," says Roger. "Around the trees, we worked by hand using a spade, being careful not to damage the tree roots." They then tilled the removed soil in a commercial composting facility, leaving a sandy wood-burned. A smaller lawn can be ripped off with a spade and composted at home. Either way, soil needs more early when the soil is moist, so water if necessary a few days before tilling the soil.

With the soil gone, Roger set about improving the soil. He added the planting area three times, first to loosen the soil. Then he spread a 2-inch thick layer of coarse mulch and (available from many suppliers) over the planting area and tilled it in. "The soil was a little on the clay side and I felt that would help loosen it. Most ground covers root at the surface, so a loose soil surface helps them take hold," he says. Finally, he tilled in a 2-inch deep layer of compost, a good addition regardless of soil type. It helps dry soil become more porous, and it improves the water- and nutrient-holding capacity of sandy soils.

## WOODLAND GROUND COVERS

Woodland ground covers spread fast and bind tightly together to prevent soil erosion. Some plants are aggressive spreaders, including English ivy, common periwinkle, and English ivy. In a small, tidy garden they will likely take the space where they aren't wanted when combined with their aggressive nature. Some, however, like the plants listed here, are slow to spread, or with regular thinning out. "What makes a plant a good

ground cover can also make it a garden bane," says Randall Peckham, an invasive plants specialist at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. So when choosing ground covers for a small yard or garden, look for types that grow slowly, rather than those that spread quickly to spread aggressively. All of the plants listed here are hardy in USDA Zone 5 to 10 (20°F to 60°F) and will tolerate light shade.



**ALLIUM TRIQUETRUM**  
(Pearly Queen's Delight)  
Before, after, and during  
growth, this perennial  
forms a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**SAXIFRAGA HYPNOIDES**  
(Hypnoid Saxifrage)  
Aggressive, evergreen  
forming a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**RANUNCULUS ACRIS**  
(Cuckoo Flower)  
Aggressive, evergreen  
forming a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**VERONICA MONSPELIENSIS**  
(Veronica monspeliensis)  
Aggressive, evergreen  
forming a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**GALEOPSIS OFFICINALIS**  
(Wormwood)  
Aggressive, evergreen  
forming a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**DRYAS OCTOPETALA**  
(Dryas octopetala)  
Forming a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**THYMUS PRAECOX**  
(Thymus praecox)  
Forming a dense, low-lying  
mat with small white  
flowers in spring. 3-12 in. tall.



**THYMUS PRAECOX**  
(Thymus praecox)  
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**LIFE** After outlining large, irregularly shaped planting areas with spray paint, Roger Cook (left) and his crew arranged dozens of the same kind of plants within sections.

After the third sowing, Roger spread superphosphate (3-18-46) and complete 10-6-6 granular fertilizers according to package directions. "That saves you from having to fertilize the individual plants," he says. Then he raked the soil to level it and provide an even surface for planting, and finally covered it with a layer of aged pine-bark mulch. "Mulch keeps weeds down and conserves moisture in the soil. Plus, it helps stabilize the beds," says Roger. Spread the mulch prior to planting, so avoid harming new plants by burying them.

#### PUTTING IN THE PLANTS

Following the architect's plan, Roger's crew delineated the planting beds, separating the sections of each planting area directly on the mulch. Then the crew arranged plants within these containers to determine spacing. They placed the plants in a staggered pattern, rather than in perfect rows, to encourage quick, even coverage. "Randomness is harder to achieve than a straight line," says Roger, who advises checking the plants

PHOTOS BY KAREN SHAW



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from all angles point to placing them in the ground, to make sure you get the desired effect.

Plants were spaced according to their rate and habit of growth. For example, Ruger set perennials, including *Allyceburg perennials* and common perennials, 6 to 8 inches apart, ferns 12 to 14 inches apart, and woody shrubs, such as junipers, 2 to 3 feet or more apart.

With the plants positioned, the crew worked from the center of each planting bed out, removing the pins and installing the plants one at a time. They pulled away mulch and dug holes using a 3-pronged hand cultivator. Each hole was filled with the top of an 8-in. ball slightly above the soil level. Immediately after planting, the crew spread the mulch back over the plants' roots and worked well. "You'll never have to mulch again," says Ruger, "because the plants spread quickly to cover the ground."

#### MAINTAINING THE LANDSCAPE

All raw ground-cover plantings—even drought-resistant ones—need regular irrigation for at least six to eight growing seasons while



*When turf grass once struggled to survive in front of this local Colonial Revival, 12 different varieties of ground covers have been planted. Just months after being put in, they have taken hold and started to spread.*

annual pruning or shearing. "In about two years, once the plants fill in, we'll decide if we need to thin any out," says Clouse. He expects that in some cases plants will have gained that upper hand and others will need replacing. "There's always a certain amount of trial and error," he says. "What's clear, just several months after planting, is that the ground covers have taken hold to stabilize the slope, and have started to accept a look similar to this suburban landscape."

The ground covers used here won't require annual pruning or shearing. "In about two years, once the plants fill in, we'll decide if we need to thin any out," says Clouse. He expects that in some cases plants will have gained that upper hand and others will need replacing. "There's always a certain amount of trial and error," he says. "What's clear, just several months after planting, is that the ground covers have taken hold to stabilize the slope, and have started to accept a look similar to this suburban landscape."

#### GROUND COVERS FOR VARIOUS SITES

With hundreds of ground covers available, there are varieties to suit virtually all growing conditions. Below is a sampling of plants to consider when dealing with four common site problems. Approximate minimum hardiness temperatures are given for each. Other factors, including root, hardiness and the intensity of summer sunbake, also determine how well a ground cover will grow in a given site.



**Dry, Dry Areas**  
 Carpet grass (*Poa annua*), 20°F  
 Beards (*Stachys triflorus*), to 10°F  
 Lavender cotton (*Stachys triflorus*), to 10°F  
 Meadow saffron (*Colchicum autumnale*), 20°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F



**Between Pavers**  
 Fat blue grass (*Poa annua*), 20°F  
 Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), 10°F  
 Dymaloid (*Dymaloid margarita*), 20°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F



**For Shady Sites**  
 Allegheny patch (*Phytolacca americana*), 20°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F



**To Stabilize a Slope**  
 Allegheny patch (*Phytolacca americana*), 20°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F  
 Rock-rose (*Phyllis fruticosa*), to 10°F



The house is early Victorian. The air conditioning is from the Dark Ages.

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Let alone like a cozy vacation cabin, the nearly built 730-square-foot houseboat floats with about 100 others in Portage Bay in Seattle. It requires a million dollars to buy the 110-ft-long one, but for some it's a home.



When they first dreamed of owning a houseboat, Jonathan and Arminda Phillips figured it would be just a brief fling. "Our idea was that we'd do a big purge, start small, and stay in a houseboat four or five years. Then we'd move into a regular house," Arminda says. But now that they're in their 730-square-foot floating cottage on Seattle's Portage Bay, they can't imagine ever moving. "This house is a

## on the waterfront

A houseboat haven made for modern living *By Jennie Heber*

little jewel box," Arminda says. "We'll be in it forever."

The couple began toying with the idea of a houseboat before their marriage in 1999. They looked at everything on the market, from \$125,000 floating cubes to \$1 million-and-up castles with multiple boat slips and multicar garages on land nearby. Then a realtor took them to a houseboat on Portage Bay



The 340-square-foot floating house had been built in the early 1800s, when houseboats were cheap living quarters for mill workers and laborers. It had the best view and the most consistency of any of the places they'd seen. But the pool was so low that Jon, at 4 foot 2, could stand up only in the center. Like most houseboats, this one was built on a float of wooden pilings hoisted by wooden beams, supports, and air-filled floatation buoys (see "Building an 'Afloat,'" page 140). An inspection of the house and its platform revealed why several windows had cracked: Huge old growth cedar logs, the main flotation system, are 10 feet wide under most of the structure but narrower at both ends. Additions, these end pieces filled in the larger whenever a big water ground under north, causing the structure to bend. If the platform was repaired, the walls could never settle and the work that would be needed to raise the pool and redesign the support system. If Jon and Amanda wanted to live there—and they did—they would have to take the experts' advice: Tear down the house and rebuild on the platform.

They lived in the old houseboat for about a year while they planned a new one with the help of Chuck Gerke, an architect in Corvallis, Oregon. Gerke had never designed a houseboat, but Jon and Amanda like

*about* The heavy water features swirling canyons and an open plan that leads to the kitchen. The white pine floor and wood-burning fireplace make it warm and inviting on chilly Seattle nights. **Below** The houseboat's floor plan follows the footprint of the old structure.



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opons to the deck, allowing the couple to use both indoor and outdoor space when they vacation. Past the kitchen and the living room, a hallway runs down the center of the house, with the bathroom on one side and a great bedroom/office on the other. The master bedroom is in the back flanked by a tiny laundry cubby, just big enough to hold a stacking washer and dryer, and the rest small, but totally charming. "We wanted a warm, cozy house people can look their shoes in."

The latest will soon get even easier: The couple's first child is due in December. Converting the office to the baby's room will



**LEFT** The master bedroom's design really shines for its sense of style, created by an array of decorative touches. The upper deck, with its lounge garden and outdoor furniture, is the closest thing to a backyard, functioning as an outside living area.

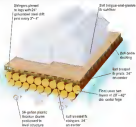
require one unusual step: calling in divers to adjust the flotation tanks under the house's foundation. Jon and Arminda want to move a granite table that's now in the room, but the slab is so heavy that the houseboat might be thrown off kilter.

It's not surprising that an adventurous couple who met while working at the French consulate in LBJ would opt to live on the water. But the place doesn't fit the mold at Marooned headquarters, where Jon works now. "My French have 3,000 square-foot houses," he says. "The thing is that when we got together, marriage was to come to my place." ■

## Building on Water

Tobacco elevates alcohol to a step with the lubrication of a heating burner. For instance, the owner can't just drive a truck up to the property and unload, says Eric Ringstrom, a contributor and board member of "AC For Philippi" (acforphilippi.com), a website devoted to the restoration of the farm. "And maintain every step of the building process until you're in the shed, which means it's in the end zone, Ringstrom bullies out of temperance. "You build a wall on one side of the house, then one on the other side," he says. "Then you can't be above to fold (refrigerate) barrels under the house." Lifting other bulky parts of the founding art of organs. "You eventually need oil, wine, oil, pine, and cheese (wine)," he adds.

With no crowd space or ornament, the plumbing, heating system, and electrical lines are hidden in the walls or under the concrete. And due to tight restrictions, Hagebeem frames the floor joists one floor with their carrying beams (attached with joist hangers), and on top of them. Sometimes he uses steel plates or blocking because they bridge wide distances without heavy bracing. "Everything has to be compromised," Hagebeem says. "We were like building a cabinet into a house."



1. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1996, 33, 1, 1-14.



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## 6 Save This Old House Success Stories

Ever wonder what happens to those glorious wrecks profiled each month on our back page?

Since the first issue of *This Old House*, we've showcased 61 run-down, boarded-up structures, each with distinctive architectural features, distinguished historic roots, and one catch: the desperate need for a new owner. Over the years, you've let us know

# saved!

that Save This Old House is a favorite. Some of you turn to the column first thing, others wait to savor it until the very end. Most are content just to look—and dream. Then there's that rare breed who calls the number at the bottom of the page to find out about buying the house. So far, 38 of these homes have been rescued. Here are the happy endings for a half dozen of them, from a burned-out Italianate mansion that became a bed-and-breakfast to a 100-year-old farmhouse that was moved to a neighboring town. As you'll see, these are also the stories of some very special homeowners—the ones who swept the snow from the rollers, salvaged the heart pine beneath the shag carpeting, and gave a new lease on life to some fine old houses.



By Ryan Robbins

### saved! St. Joseph, Missouri

purchase price \$10,200  
cost of renovation \$160,000

#### What's New Here:

- Refinished and painted floor
- Refinished combes and windows
- Repaired foundation, walls, and chimney
- Added 2½ bathrooms
- Replaced sagging and rotted porch
- Rebuilt staircase
- Replaced heart pine floor



**W**hen a one-year-old daughter is born, and plans for more children, Karen and John Wood decided to look for a larger home. So they drew a circle on a map that would put them within commuting distance of John's office. The 3,500-square-foot 1870s brick Italianate—vacant as a result of a fire, listed with stucco, and featured in the November 1991 issue of *TIME*—fell right on the line. John was unsure, Karen couldn't see past the tarp-covered hole where the roof had caved in. On their first walk through of the house, she only went as far as the front door. "It was colder inside than outside," recalls John. On their second tour,

Karen actually took a few steps inside before turning. "So I had to bring the house to her, using photographs," says John. Eventually he convinced her of the house's potential. The Woods bought the property, which sat on a bluff in St. Joseph's Museum Hill Historic District, in January of 1996, and moved in by Christmas of 1997. Not that it was quite home yet. "We didn't have a kitchen, let alone two pans," says Karen. In June 2000, John quit his job to start over, committed to work full-time on the house. Last summer, with the roof floor rebuilt for their now-lanky of five as well as the second floor combined with four guest rooms, he and Karen embarked on a new career proposition as residents of the Museum Hill Bed & Breakfast.



**"The first time I looked at the house there was snow piled up on the mantel. My wife wouldn't even go inside the place."** — JOHN WOOD



The kitchen (left), with its exposed brick wall, heart pine floor, and exposed brick wall, was once a stone-covered area (right). The new maple cabinet was fashioned to match a built-in built around in the house.



**OPPOSITE** Although the guest room required much plaster and stone-work, an elegant mantel needed only a dose of lavender oil in living back in later years. The Woods, who live in the 20th while raising it, enjoy the front porch. Room One of the period style guest room, complete with claw-foot tub.



**saved!**  
**Edenton, North Carolina**

purchase price: **\$2,000**  
cost of renovation: **\$395,000**

**What's New Here**

- Mixed race
- Built new brick foundation
- Added second-floor ceiling, 7 bed
- Shipped and painted siding
- Original window
- Added 2 bedrooms
- Installed plumbing, electrical and HVAC



before

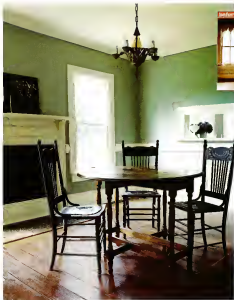


The restored house (right) was moved and all its details were in. When the light was finally a moment of peace.

**F**or the 40 years that D.T. Ward's late-of-the century farmhouse stood vacant, his daughter-in-law watched over it and was sad to have chased off looters with a shotgun. Following the house's appearance in the October 1999 *TIME*, as well as several details—the porch gables, the oak porch, even the original lighting fixtures—caught the eye of contractor Alex Klammer and Edenton Wilson. They purchased the house the following summer, and though they didn't intend to change much, they did have to move it. After removing the doors, windows, and roof, lifting off the tin roof with

a crane, and raising upon the remaining wall framing, they loaded the pieces onto flatbed trucks and carried the disassembled house to a new lot 20 miles away. Then they put it back together. "Every inch of molding that was in the house is still there," says Alex. During the two-year renovation, with two helpers, they made a few changes, like booming the second floor's headroom by 12 inches and fitting three bedrooms into the 1,900-square-foot structure. But the original floor was still there, and the beautiful ceilings, and the century-old chip boards—all of a heart pine. "The house had never been remodeled," says Alex. "We were lucky. There was nothing to redo."

"The house had been vacant for 40 years, but everything was still intact, including the 100-year-old heart pine siding—it's magical stuff." —ALEX KLAMMER



before

Alex Klammer and Edenton Wilson (right) refurbished the dining room's oak mantelpiece (bottom) and its original pine floors and trim. In the renovated space (top), they also added a convenient pass-through to the kitchen.



**saved!**  
**Little Rock, Arkansas**  
 purchase price, **\$45,000**  
 cost of renovation, **\$360,000**

**What They Did**

- Put in under-slab and
- Replaced foundation and roof
- Replaced aluminum siding and exterior
- Replaced original windows
- Replaced original door
- Added kitchen, 1.5 bathrooms, and laundry closet
- Added plumbing, electrical, and HVAC



The house's original front porch (left), with its double columns and ornate brackets, was rebuilt from a 1930s photograph.

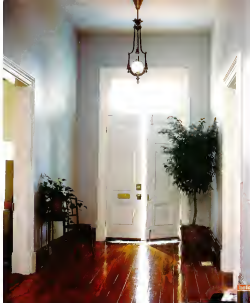


looking in

**R**ichard Butler was a little boy growing up in the 1940s when he first visited the Haze house, then the local Girl Scout headquarters. After the devastating 1969 hurricane passed in the June 2000 issue of *TCM*, Richard paid the house another visit—and bought it. “The house had curved floor joists and a veranda,” says Richard. “It deserved better.” He quickly embarked on a painstaking restoration of the cottage. “I have gone way over budget,” he adds, “but I have followed all of the historic guidelines faithfully.” That meant ripping off five layers of coating material and replacing it with timber and cedar shakes, recreating the missing

one porch using its recently unearthed foundation piers as a guide; hanging copper gutters and downspouts, restoring the original floor plan; and reproducing two period mantelpieces. Richard assumed that the house’s six-over-six windows be replaced with antique glass, and he had a preservationist paint them green on and shellac the original double front doors. Even the door hardware is period. Consequently, the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas has removed the house from Arkansas’s list of Most Endangered Historic Places. Richard’s list, however, just keeps getting longer. “I’ve still got to marbleize the mantels,” he says, “and hang new window shutters, and put up the draperies—”

PHOTOS: PHOTOS.COM/ANTHONY BISHOP; BOB FORD; LARRY LARBY; HAZEL



Homeowner Richard Butler (below left) recreated the original front porch by recreating a small front porch that had been opened up during a previous renovation (below right)



looking in

**“I went way over budget, but you could do a fine job for much less.”**

— RICHARD BUTLER



## saved!

Petersburg, Virginia

purchase price: \$200,000  
cost of renovation: \$600,000

### What's Your Story?

- Replaced the roof and gutters
- Replaced porch foundation
- Replaced roof and gutters
- Replaced first-floor windows
- Replaced kitchen and bathroom
- Replaced kitchen and bathroom

The city of Petersburg underwent a 10-month siege during the Civil War. But this was nothing compared with the 10-year vacancy that boarded-up 1899 Fols Victorian had endured when TGV bought it in September/October 1996. It would be yet another five years before Fred and John French finally rescued the 3,222-square-foot structure. "We had been looking for an older house with charm, and this one gave us the most for our money," says Fred. As buyers, as it turned out, they were pleasantly surprised when they pried all the plywood from the doors and windows. "The house's walls and floors were in good shape and there was very little rot," says Fred. The property is one of many 18th- and 19th-century residences located within Petersburg's Old Town Historic District, which stretches along the Appomattox River. In addition to restoring the wrap-around porch using the original scrollwork brackets that the previous owner had stored in the house, they added a picket fence, landscape plantings, and a small fish pond. Soon after the peeling restoration was completed, the once derelict house won the High Street Association's 2001 "Curbed Appeal" award.



Who'da had lived in the town of the century Fols Victorian house one year for 12 years, but the dining room moved from yard and another in the parlor beyond were in "fantastic shape," say owners Fred and John French (left). "And the floors only needed a thorough cleaning and waxing."



PHOTOS: MICHAEL GOODMAN; ARCHITECT: JAMES W. HARRIS

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—George E. Will

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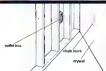
## Norm's Notebook



### Removing Broken Screws

**I** bought my first car, a '68 Ford coupe, for \$50 and spent many hours with my father and a buddy reasoning it. "Young boys often have more muscle than brains, and we snapped off more than a few bolt heads taking things apart. I'm a carpenter now, not a mechanic, but I think of that Ford whenever I twist the head off a wood or drywall screw, which is easy to do when you drive them with an electric drill. But with a screw extractor, all is not lost.

The version you're most likely to find—in stores or catalogs that sell wood-working tools—is a metal tube with teeth on one end, like a tap hole saw. It comes in various sizes to handle screws up to a #8 or so. Chuck it in your drill, center it over a screw, and drill away. It cuts a cylindrical plug, which just snaps out along with the damaged screw. Make sure you don't hit the shank as you're drilling; the extractor will break if its teeth catch the screw. That's what happened the first one I used one. But if it all goes right, you can fill the resulting hole with a short length of dowel.



### Marking Electrical Outlets on Drywall

**O**ne sign of a good drywall job is how well the sheets are cut to fit around electrical boxes. When there's hardly a gap, it tells you somebody knew what they were doing. These days, guys often use a latch-mounted tool to make the cut, but I don't do drywall often enough to make a worthwhile tool buy one. Instead, I use a stick of chalk, which is more accurate than measuring and saves a lot of time.

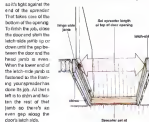
When all the boxes are in place, I rub chalk on each one's front edge and push the drywall into place. (On plaster boxes that don't slide that well, I sometimes have to scuff up their edges first with a piece of sandpaper or the blade of my utility knife.) When I pull the panel away, the chalk leaves an easy-to-see outline of the box on the back of the panel. I can then put cut along the chalk line with a drywall saw. This trick also works when installing short paneling.

Chalk is easy, so keep it in a plastic bag or small container as your toolbox between uses.

### Easier Door Hanging

**A** door isn't worth much if it doesn't fit right. That's why door hanging is generally left to the best carpenters or a crew. When you're having trouble getting a new door to fit right, there's a way to make the process go a lot smoother.

After the jamb on the hinge side has been shinned plumb and leveled, use a spreader to help set a perfectly parallel jamb on the latch side. Cut the spreader from a scrap of wood to match exactly the distance between the two jambs at the top of the doorframe. Don't measure the distance—just hold the spreader up there, scribe it with a sharp pencil, and cut along the line a waste side. Now set the spreader between the jambs at the threshold and align the latch-side jamb so it's tight against the







# DIRECTORY

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES BALDER

what's inside:

Design inspiration • Style that's always in season • Ideas you can use now

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Home & Garden Television's

## Warming TRENDS FOR FALL

A special supplement courtesy of HGTV

WIT BRINGS WARMTH TO DESIGN:

### A Chat with Michael Graves

From teakettles to Walt Disney World, from steam clocks to grand hotels, you name it, Michael Graves has designed it. One of today's most influential architects, Michael Graves has made a colorful mark on design and architecture. His belief that design should be accessible to everyone, along with his boundless enthusiasm, has led him to design everything from toasters to toilet brushes. Take a look at how his style brings warmth to large-scale hotels, as well as light and color to private residences. Home & Garden Television introduces you to Michael Graves and takes you on a tour of some of his one-of-a-kind designs.

**PUBLIC PLACES** Michael Graves is known for his bold use of proportion and color, along with a little bit of humor. His style is characterized by the use of geometric shapes, as well as classical influences like columns, pediments and arches. It's his wit, though, combined with a playful use of color, which makes even his grandest structures more approachable than imposing.

Graves' whimsical approach made him the ideal designer for two Disney World hotels, the Dolphin and Swan.

"Kids are coming with their folks to a Disney theme park, and when they see the hotel, I want it to put a smile on their faces," Graves explains. He perched a 50-foot dolphin atop the pyramid-shaped Dolphin Hotel; an enormous waterfall tumbles down the side. Seven-foot swans adorn the gracefully curved roofline of its sister hotel. Graves' exuberant color choices were influenced by the lush Florida environment, with vivid shades of turquoise reflecting the water and corals reflecting sand and sunsets.



▲ Michael Graves creates whimsical designs for everyday objects.

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▶ **PRIVATE SPACES** While well-known public buildings are on his list of accomplishments, private homes are also among the jewels of Graves' designs, and the Cincinnati home pictured here is no exception. The architect describes how he blended the old along with his own signature style. "There was a 19th-century barn on the site—the client wanted to tear it down, and I insisted on using wood from the barn, so the house reveals its own history."

"My architecture is a number of easy pieces coming together," says Graves.

A burst of color greets you at the doorway: the living room, study, dining room and foyer are a series of small buildings joined together. "My architecture is a number of easy pieces coming together," says Graves. His bold use of color juxtaposes a red dining room with a white kitchen and honey-colored breakfast room. Yet another contrast is the living room, a vast blue expanse with a vaulted ceiling crafted of golden pear wood from the old barn.

Graves sums up his approach to design: "I think that finally, the way a building is proportioned, the way color is used, the way it's established on the landscape, is the way it might describe us... that is interesting to me."



▲ Michael Graves blended the old and new to create this unique home in Cincinnati.

### New Series

To see the new HGTV series *Public Places, Private Spaces*, visit [hgtv.com](http://hgtv.com) every day! And other fun facts about the show, visit [hgtv.com](http://hgtv.com).

**Public Places, Private Spaces**  
Mondays at 10:00 pm/9:00 c.

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## The Treasure Hunter

Coming to a Doorstep Near You

▶ When Harry Rinker rings your bell, you never know what he'll find. The antiques and collectibles expert browses the country going to people's homes, poking into their closets, attics, and basements, often finding treasures they didn't even know they had. "People think all the treasures are in museums or in the homes of collectors," Rinker explains. "But all my life I've gone to people's homes as an appraiser. I've found great things in attics and garages that they thought were just stuff!" In HGTV's newest collectibles show, host Harry Rinker finds these hidden treasures and determines their worth.

Some of the treasures found in HGTV's door-to-door search of homes have monetary value; others are kept for sentimental reasons. Some are simply part of the decor. At the home of Gladys Sutherland of Southern California, Rinker picks up a silver-plated teapot that was polished down to its base metal, and has been converted to a lamp. "I like this use—I like personal stuff reusing it and finding ways to make it part of your life. Antiques are not necessarily meant to be worshipped, they're meant to be enjoyed."

A 1960s home in the nearby hills is decorated as though untouched by passing decades, with a unique collection of turquoise ceramics, kitchenware, and furniture, mostly from the '50s and '60s. Mary Mellon, who seems too young to have grown up with all of these artifacts, has spent years collecting them. Rinker picks up a vase off the kitchen floor. "Like many collectors, Mary knows what she likes but doesn't know what it's worth," Rinker laughs. He identifies the vase as a great example of high-end art glass from the 1930s, giving a conservative estimate of \$150 to \$225, along with some advice: "Get it off the floor!"



As far as trends go, "The hot decades to collect now are the '50s, '60s and '70s," says Rinker, author of *Official Guide to Real Market Prices* and other authoritative books on collectibles. "The post-World War II generation is getting older now, and people want to buy back their childhood." He says items like toys, music, TV and movie memorabilia, even clothing from that era, are hot collectibles.

### New Series

A house is like a Christmas present. Let to open one up each day," says Harry Rinker, host of HGTV's newest collectibles show. Check local listings for details, and join us as we travel across America, in style. For more info:

**The collectibles hour begins Fridays at 8:00 pm/7:00 c.**



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# A SENSIBLE, Sunny Transformation

As colors outside become brilliant and the weather turns crisp, change is in the air. And as we look forward to spending more time inside during the coming months, it's only natural to want to change our indoor environment, and take the edge off winter's gray.

A popular style that adds year-round warmth is European Country. Many American designers and homeowners are charmed by this casual elegance and handcrafted nature of the rich look of this approach.

And, as HGTV's *Sensible Chic* shows us, you don't have to spend a lot of money to have a great new look. On these pages, the warm atmosphere of a European Country look is re-created for a fraction of the price of the living room by designer and homeowner Linda Applewhite pictured below. Vibrant and whimsical, Applewhite's "Inspiration Room" features recycled architectural items, textured oil paintings, garden elements and "old, funky chairs." The chairs, though old, are re-covered in unique fabrics that cost thousands of dollars.

## Transforming the Makeover Room

Here are the steps designer Stuart Phomok used to turn the stark white room, pictured at the right, into a

warm and charming living area with the feel of Applewhite's Inspiration Room.

- Painted the walls a Tuscan yellow, then rag-rolled a buff glaze over the paint for texture (Benjamin Moore paint - Hawthorne Yellow HC-4, Benjamin Moore glaze - Stuart Gold HC-10)
- Created a straight-cut rustic mantel for the fireplace from old redwood lintel, in the center, added an old iron medallion, similar to the design in the Inspiration Room.
- Hung a salvaged-wood shutter on the wall, painted gray to match the mantel and beams and hung two pieces of vertical scroll ironwork on either side.
- Added an area rug in muted colors (IKEA)
- Hung a bright floral print over the fireplace (Z Gallerie)
- Accessorized the mantel with paper-mâché garden finials (Marshalls) and candelabras filled with colorful sand bells, on the hearth, placed discount versions of walking sticks, fire tools and topiaries.
- Filled the bookcase with a garden ornament, bric-a-brac, crockery, architectural elements and ferns.
- Created a seating area with a green baby wingback chair and a red-checked chair, added an iron table found at an auction, and a lamp with a fringed shade.
- Instead of an ottoman, like the one in the Inspiration Room, added a traditional round table with pre-drill edge in front of the fireplace.

## The Bottom Line

Take a look at this cool companion of some Inspiration Room items and the creatively comparable ones used in the Makeover Room:

- Mantel, \$300 / Mantel, \$70 (for materials)
- Rug, \$6,000 / Rug, \$300
- Seed pots, \$175 / Seed pots, \$40
- Garden finials, \$1,600 / Garden finials, \$30
- Lamp, \$2,000 / Lamp, \$70
- Table & accessories, \$2,285 / Table & accessories, \$140

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▲ Makeover Room: BEFORE



▲ Makeover Room: AFTER \$1,500

## Returning Series

For design inspiration, watch *Sensible Chic* Saturdays at 5:30 pm/7:30 c. And, you can also watch HGTV's *Design of the Week* on HGTV. Design of the Week, a full hour of decorating and design shows at 9:00 pm/5:00 c.

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## ► House Warmers

Just as you layer your clothes to keep out the winter chill, you can use layering in your home to make a more inviting place. Interior designer Chris Gasson Madden offers some layering advice to create your own cozy winter haven.

- Layer rugs over rugs. You can even layer area rugs over carpeting to define certain areas. Intricately patterned Oriental or brilliantly colored silk carpeting looks great over neutral woven rugs. Use a non-slip rug pad.
- Throws on the furniture. Throws now come in richly patterned cashmere, woolsens with wheel trim, chenille with silk tassels or edging, or quilted silks. They offer the promise of warmth and a sense of style when tossed over a sofa or chair.
- Consider slip-covering your dining room chairs even if they are wooden, to soften and warm for winter comfort.
- Don't be afraid to mix fabrics—antique or modern palettes, Indian florals, chaises, pais, crewelwork and embroidery—when tossing on the pillows and throws.
- Replace lampshades on chandeliers and candlesticks with jewel-toned ones dripping with crystals.

## Returning Series

Find advice by Chris Gasson Madden on HGTV's *Design of the Week* on HGTV. Design of the Week, a full hour of decorating and design shows at 9:00 pm/5:00 c.



▲ Inspiration Room, \$32,000

He Said

She Said

Solutions From Interior Designer Michael Payne

▶ Michael Payne, host of HGTV's *Designing for the Sexes*, has been called half therapist, half interior designer. He's known for his ability to help couples through renovation projects, keeping both parties happy without sacrificing aesthetics. An internationally renowned designer, Payne provides interior, architectural and landscape design services to an impressive list of clients, including Hollywood celebrities.

Q: My husband wants flooring in an antique, dark distressed wood plank. I love terra cotta mixed with cobble accents. Do you believe these two floor elements can be blended successfully? We were thinking of mixing the two in the foyer, then doing the den/dining room in wood and the family room, kitchen and nook in terra cotta.

MP: Yes, this can be successfully achieved as long as the pattern in the entry is very formal. For example, you could make a border in the entry of the tile, and inside have a beautiful design of the wood you plan to use. Or you could do the opposite with a wood border and interesting tile design within that border. This would be a way of introducing to guests the two main types of flooring that they will see elsewhere.

▲ Michael Payne, HGTV's *Designing for the Sexes* host

Q: You can see my dining room from my living room. I have hardwood floors. Do I need to get the same rug for both rooms? I have checked drapes, dark greens, reds and tans. What type rug would look good?

MP: Absolutely not! Having the same rug is very unimaginative. Choose two rugs that work nicely together. The type would be hard to suggest here. Choosing a rug is a little like choosing art. The beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so I would suggest visiting your rug store and purchasing two rugs you love regardless of the style.

Q: My husband and I have a medium-sized bathroom that connects to our master bedroom. We have just completed the bedroom with warm wood tones, roasted red pepper walls, and a French country check pattern for curtains. Help us with the bathroom. We have no ideas!

MP: You have to seriously consider green walls in your bathroom. It will be spectacular to look into your bedroom with its red and pepper walls into the green of your bathroom. The actual color green is yours to decide. It could be a sage green, which would look the best. Your fixtures in the bathroom should be white. The flooring would ideally be a natural limestone tile. Your counters could be limestone slab, which would look marvelous against the sage green walls. It sounds wonderful!



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## ▶ AT HOME WITH FRAN DRESCHER

address with the famous Queens accent found her peaceful retreat far from her native New York.

Situated on a "wedding" beach right on the Pacific Ocean, during high tide the house feels like you're on a cruise ship. With this ocean as a backdrop, Drescher decided to keep the decor simple. "When you live with big picture windows that look out onto the ocean, that's really your art, so you don't want to compete with that," she explains. A monochromatic color scheme is dominated by white with touches of beige.

Drescher has surrounded herself with the things she loves, and her eclectic mix of furniture styles and fabrics creates an elegant look. In the living room, a formal linen couch sits next to a pair of vintage rattan lounge chairs and a handmade Indian chair with an inset design. Nowhere is the mix of periods and styles more prevalent than in the dining room, where carved antique chairs, covered in a contemporary fabric, surround a rustic white farm table. "I love that look, because when you put crystal and fine things on it the juxtaposition is so beautiful and rich," she says.

Drescher's unique flair is evident in the kitchen as well, creating black marble countertops are softened by the feminine curves of a floral wrought-iron chandelier. Another unusual addition is a built-in aquarium, which breaks up a long wall of cabinets. The aquarium created a challenge as the other side of it faces the master bedroom. Drescher had the fish tank fully landscaped with foliage so that someone in the kitchen couldn't see who's in the master bath!

Drescher admits that, when renovating a home, you should make sure there is a connection between the old and new, so that the rooms flow together well. She is happy about the home she's created, "as long as I'm surrounded by the people I love, and the things I love—they don't have to be valuable, just things that are special to me. Here is really where the heart is. My home is my nest."



▲ Fran Drescher shows a color scheme she loves for her retreat.

### Returning Series

Today's wedding, tomorrow's divorce, and how to stay sane in the process. *At Home With, Mondays at 8:00 pm/7:00 c.*

### Returning Series

For more design inspiration, stay on to HGTV's new series, *Designing for the Sexes*, with Michael Payne. And to make it even easier, we've created a guide to help you find the perfect design solution. *Designing for the Sexes* on Thursdays at 8:00 pm/7:00 c.

### HGTV's New Fall Primetime Line Up

Time	Host	Subject	Co-Host	Guest	Co-Host	Guest	Co-Host	Guest
8:00 pm	Alanna Roth	Large Animal Care	London Brown	Wildlife Stories	Timothy Egan	Farm Weather News	Edwin S. Shaw	
8:30 pm	Michael & Angela	Super Garden	Bill	Landscaping Challenge	Seamus O'Connell	Swedish Chef	Seamus O'Connell	
9:00 pm	Bill	Focus by Focus	Eric & Julie	Designing for the Sexes	Michael Payne	Room by Room	Seamus O'Connell	
9:30 pm	Seamus O'Connell	Geometric Color	Cristina Silva	Wildlife Stories	Timothy Egan	Swedish Chef	Seamus O'Connell	
10:00 pm	Paula Patton	Home Access America	The Ultimate Challenge	Home Matters	Seamus O'Connell	Designing for the Sexes	Michael Payne	
10:30 pm	Seamus O'Connell	Seamus O'Connell	Bill & Ted	Home Matters	Seamus O'Connell	Designing for the Sexes	Michael Payne	

Design of the Week

NOT a Working Title

Programs are subject to change without notice.

## SURE BETS FOR AUTUMN COLOR

Some plants look spectacular in the summer landscape, but do little to add interest or color in the fall or winter. Take a look at some plants that can add color to your garden in cooler weather.

- **Burning bush** (*Euonymus alatus*), Zones 4-9, bursts into shades of bright red in the fall.
- **Katsura tree** (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*), Zones 4-8, needs a lot of moisture when young. Its bluish-green heart-shaped leaves turn a rich yellow apricot-orange before falling in November.
- **Red leaf rose** (*Rosa glauca*), Zones 2-7, has pink flowers in late spring, then red rose hips emerge in August and linger until December—unless the birds eat them.
- **Beautyberry** (*Callicarpa tomentosa*), Zones 6-11, gets a fringe of yellow and pinish-lavender on its leaves in fall and boasts intensely magenta/lavender berries.

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• **Japanese maple** (*Acer palmatum dissectum*), Zones 5-8. The dwarf, shrubby forms of the Japanese maple are beautiful in spring and fall, but its bare branches can also provide striking sculptural forms in the winter garden.

**In the Zone?** To make sure a plant will do well in your part of the country, follow the USDA climate zone system (10 zones). For a detailed explanation of zones, log onto [hgic.com](http://hgic.com) and search under Gardening by the Vase! Episode #113 (G8H-113) then click on "What's Your Zone?"

### Returning Series

Get more landscaping inspiration from **Landscape's** **Designs**, **Thursdays** at **8:30 pm/7:30 c** on **HGTV**. See today's **landscape** go to [hgic.com](http://hgic.com) from the designs of three pros. Don't watch as the outdoor space is transformed.

From an article by **Walter Heller**  
Photos by **Michael A. Gier** courtesy of **Instagram**



Katsura tree



Japanese maple



Red leaf rose

## Inspired Inventions

Ever wonder how your favorite everyday appliances came into being? How they really work? Or what kind of person had the inspiration to invent them? Match up the following descriptions with the right household appliance.

1. This hot device was discovered when an engineer at Procter & Gamble was attaching too close to a device called a magnifying, and the device got in his pocket instead. (It's not known whether he was wearing a pocket protector at the time.)
2. This squeaky clean, time-saving device was invented by a weary socialite.

3. This appliance, known for breaking the ice at parties, was named after a Big Band leader of the 1940s.
4. No more sweeping it under the carpet after this device was created by a janitor with an allergy to dust.
5. In the '50s, the American Public Health Association boldly predicted this kitchen device would make the garbage can obsolete.

**Apply yourself! And find the answer!**

- a.** Varing blender **b.** dishwasher **c.** garbage disposal  
**d.** vacuum cleaner **e.** microwave

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

### New Series

To get the best ideas on how to make your appliances work better, watch **HGTV's** new series **How's That Work?** on **Wednesdays** at **10:30 pm/9:30 c**.

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ON THE JOE  
pp. 18-24

Construction foam adhesives: Fox Stick, Total Products, Norwalk, MA; 800-631-8818; [www.total.com](http://www.total.com)  
Foam/Foam Plus, Wind-Lock Corp., Lenoir, PA; 877-468-5643; [www.wind-lock.com](http://www.wind-lock.com)

Poison Control Hotline: American Association of Poison Control Centers, Washington, DC; 202-362-7217; [www.1800-222-1222.info](http://www.1800-222-1222.info)

Preservation Yellow Pages: Published by Preservation Press, John Wiley & Sons Inc.; [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

Housing stock information: U.S. Census Bureau; [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)  
Automatic meter readings: Howard Scott, Ph.D., Cogent Consulting LLC, Piquette, NJ; 973-696-5793

HOUSE CALLS WITH  
STEVE  
pp. 28-32

Page 32—Replacement cabinet doors (clockwise from top left): #146 in vertical grain fir, Scherr's Cabinet & Door Inc., Minot, ND; 701-829-3184; [www.scherr.com](http://www.scherr.com)  
700 series thermocoll in neutral maple finish, Quality Doors; 800-933-3667; [www.qualitydoors.com](http://www.qualitydoors.com)  
200 series saffron door in cherry with burgundy finish, Quality Doors  
515 series raised-panel in maple, Quality Doors  
300 series paint-grade maple door, Quality Doors

ASK THIS OLD HOUSE  
pp. 34-40

Polyethylene foam: Cyroc, Miami Springs, CN; Canada; 888-946-732; [www.cyroc.com](http://www.cyroc.com)

Wood flooring standards: National Wood Flooring Association, Effort, PA; 800-422-4356; [www.nwfa.org](http://www.nwfa.org)

woodloom.org  
Front-loading washers: Miele Inc., Princeton, NJ; 800-843-7251; [www.miele.com](http://www.miele.com)

Front-loading combination washer/dryer: Quantum Laundry Systems, FJS Distributors Inc., Duluth, MN; 800-834-8615; [www.quantum.com](http://www.quantum.com)  
Stacked washer/dryer: Full-Size Stack Washers/Electric Dryer, Maytag, Cleveland, TN; 800-688-9900; [www.maytag.com](http://www.maytag.com)

Lower-cost windows: Alfred Window Inc., Cincinnati, OH; 800-445-1411; [www.alfredwindow.com](http://www.alfredwindow.com)  
Harvey Windows Inc., Waltham, MA; 800-942-7838; [www.harveywindow.com](http://www.harveywindow.com)  
Marvin Windows and Doors, Warroad, MN; 800-268-7644; [www.marvin.com](http://www.marvin.com)  
Primer for laminates: X-1-M Products, Westbrook, OH; 440-873-4737; [www.x1mproducts.com](http://www.x1mproducts.com)

Our thanks to Paul Kowenski Jr., Paul the Plumber Inc.



Steve Gella, page 32: Putting new doors in cabinet is an inexpensive way to give a tired kitchen a fresh look.

Woodbridge, CT; 800-201-7188; [www.gundup.com/bene.com](http://www.gundup.com/bene.com)

EY DESIGN  
RAISING AN EYEBROW  
pp. 42-48

Contractor: Tim Lee, Lee Construction, Cold Spring Harbor, NY;



By Design, page 42: For the sophisticated owner in the home office, 3000 window cupboards from Aluma need double glazing.

631-692-4600.  
Our thanks to Bill Mold, owner, WM Mold Inc. (Poco Wood Window Distributor), Baltimore, MD; 800-542-5450.

MATERIALS: TRUE GRIT  
pp. 48-52

Opener  
Sanding system: Norton Abrasives, Worcester, MA; 508-795-5000; [www.nortonabrasives.com](http://www.nortonabrasives.com)

Sanding belts: 3M Company, St. Paul, MN; 800-494-3332; [www.3m.com](http://www.3m.com)  
Sanding sponges: Johnson Abrasives, Jeffers, NH; 800-628-4903; [www.johnsonabrasives.com](http://www.johnsonabrasives.com)

Sanding dust: Norton Abrasives  
Wet-Dry sheets: Johnson Abrasives  
Garnet sheets: Johnson Abrasives  
Page 50—Abrasive types:  
Garnet: Johnson Abrasives  
Emery: Johnson Abrasives  
Silicon carbide: Johnson Abrasives  
Ceramic: Klingspor Abrasives, Hickory, NC; 800-945-5553; [www.klingspor.com](http://www.klingspor.com)  
Aluminum oxide: Klingspor  
Alumina zirconia: Klingspor

Plough Industrial Plastics Supply Co., New York, NY; 212-226-2010.

LUXURIES:  
STELLAR CELLARS  
pp. 52-59

Wine cabinet: Muscovi VC100 with Monterey window and French door upgrade in medium finish, International Wine Accessories catalog; 800-527-4073; [www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com)  
Large wine cooler: 4305, Sub-Zero, Madison, WI; 800-222-7620; [www.subzero.com](http://www.subzero.com)

Mini wine cooler: Wine Captains 2075WC in stainless steel and



Thinking Shop, page 52: Most photos are still great results for smoothing and shaping wood. Here 1001 general contractor Tom Adams uses a sander to finish a long table's end grain, in one of the glass blocks used in the selected lantern.

2015WC in white, U-Line Corp., Milwaukee, WI; 414-334-7905; [www.u-line.com](http://www.u-line.com)

TECHNOLOGY:  
BACKUP POWER  
pp. 62-67

Portable generator:  
RE3000XCL by Honda  
Power Equipment Group,  
Alpharetta, GA; 800-426-7701;

[www.hondapowerequipment.com](http://www.hondapowerequipment.com)  
Uninterruptible power supply:  
American Power Conversion Corp., West Kingston, RI; 877-800-4272; [www.apc.com](http://www.apc.com)  
Generator distributor: Central Mass Diesel, Bangor, ME; 888-899-3633

Our thanks to Ron Ford & Garrett Menhager of The Kohler Co., Kohler, WI; 800-344-2444; [www.kohler.com](http://www.kohler.com)  
George Atwood, Knif Power, Woburn, MA; 781-838-9801

TALKING SHOP:  
HAND PLANES  
pp. 68-74

Vintage bench planes: The Old House collection  
Low-angle block plane: 560-12, Record Hand Tools, Sheffield, England; available through:  
American Tool Companies Inc., Wykesville, OH; 937-382-3811; [www.american-tool.com](http://www.american-tool.com)  
Surface-forming plane: Surface Plane

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Back in 1956, the *This Old House* crew took on this home in Lexington, Mass., renovating much of the interior and building a two-story addition.



Mike holds a newly revised set of plans for the changes to the two-family house.

## Lexington, Massachusetts: 1910 Clapboard Colonial

**Episode 4 (a) (20)**  
(airs October 9-10)

The foundation crew is alluring at the Lexington project, forming the footings and foundation walls for the new two-story addition. A side-by-side parcel for the footings in the back garage. The workers started with the concrete and finish it with a dirty-but bull foot, and power trowel. Grop to rule: the foundation work comes in at \$27,000. To help finance costs, homeowner Mary Van Selek rescues some trash trim and lighting fixtures before demolition. A side trip to a nearby O20 gives Mary Van, who's thinking of trying her hand at that business after the renovation, some insight into what it comes. Back to the project, and local Christopher DeLuxe walks through the ever-evolving design plan.

**Episode 5**  
(airs October 12-13)

TOH master carpenter Norm Abram and homeowner Jim Shive themselves in a position well to make a more spacious two-story living room. Rather than take the word in the Dumpster, Jim drives it to burn over the winter months. Mary Van hand digs a hole for the precast pillar, and they and the bulldozed door, which is saved also piece with the help of a boom truck and a crane. The installer attaches a new steel collar door with hyphen-driven metal anchors. TOH plumbing and heating expert Howard Needles Tammen & Bergendoff reveals the house's systems. He calls: Keep (but clean) the existing boiler in the main house, install a dedicated unit for the new addition, and replace the undersize copper piping with undersize copper piping.

**Episode 6**  
(airs October 18-19)

TOH general contractor Tom Abrams and the foundation crew are alluring at the Lexington project, forming the footings and foundation walls for the new two-story addition. A side-by-side parcel for the footings in the back garage. The workers started with the concrete and finish it with a dirty-but bull foot, and power trowel. Grop to rule: the foundation work comes in at \$27,000. To help finance costs, homeowner Mary Van Selek rescues some trash trim and lighting fixtures before demolition. A side trip to a nearby O20 gives Mary Van, who's thinking of trying her hand at that business after the renovation, some insight into what it comes. Back to the project, and local Christopher DeLuxe walks through the ever-evolving design plan.

**Episode 7**  
(airs October 20-21)

Norm and Tom conduct a walk-through of the almost fully framed addition, showing how the network of cross bracing and support beams is transferring the load safely to the foundation. Even in this stage of construction, improvements are still being made. For instance, the opening for the finished oil just adding glass doors in the ground-floor bedroom will be reinforced for a smaller, more private window. Upstairs, the crew installs the two glass doors with screened storm doors (SSDs). Then covers them in spun fiber air filter wrap. Landscape architect Tom Wirth discovers some challenges in a living with the ground design—making the house wheelchair-friendly and creating clear access to the two-car garage.

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By Ryan Robbins

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Dr. Cooley lived in the "classic box"—with its symmetrical facade, hipped roof, and full-width porch—from 1904 until 1931, when he sold it to an insurance man. In 1942, another physician, Lake View Hospital chief surgeon Harlow S. Cox, purchased the house. For two decades Dr. Cox lived upstairs and had his practice downstairs. Upon his retirement, a "little better for sale sign" brought the house to the attention of the

Sperry family. The lingering smell of rubbing alcohol must have charmed them. They decided to move in, reconfiguring the first-floor office space for themselves and creating out the second floor. In 1963 the house passed to the first of several show-rooms, and often shows, landlords.

The structure measures 2,640 square feet, not including the full basement and limited attic. Details include an oak front door topped by a leaded glass translight, numerous 10-over-10 windows, and the banister salvaged from the old central staircase. There is a two-story brick carriage house to the rear of the property.

The current owner is the nonprofit downtown Danville redevelopment group Renaissance Initiative Inc. It has stabilized the structure and installed a new boiler (though the plumbing still needs to be replaced), and is now looking for a buyer who will ensure the house is an single-family cottage. The group runs a series of home workshops using the Cooley house as a classroom. The next installment, "Sanding and Refinishing This Old Wood Floor," is scheduled for early November. Five mail agents are presented for all



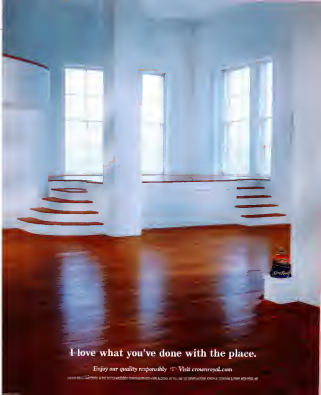
1904 Details of the renowned brickpans supplied the building materials, including decorative knifed blocks, for the Cooley house. ABOVE: One of the finer parterry borders on an arched doorway and a long cast iron radiator fashioned to follow the contour of the bay window. LEFT: A 1964 photo shows the owner Dr. Ann Sperry posing in front of the house's original full-width porch and the porte cochere, which was enclosed in the late 1960s.

CONTACT: Renaissance Initiative, Inc.  
www.renaissanceinitiative.org or 317-645-3295

If you know of a house that should be saved, please write to Save This Old House, 1180 Avenue of the Americas, 27th floor, New York, NY 10020.

Save This Old House is a not-for-profit organization, serving the historic preservation community. For more information, please visit our website at [www.thisoldhouse.com](http://www.thisoldhouse.com). We are currently seeking qualified individuals to join our team of volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact us at [volunteer@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:volunteer@thisoldhouse.com). We are currently seeking qualified individuals to join our team of volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact us at [volunteer@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:volunteer@thisoldhouse.com). We are currently seeking qualified individuals to join our team of volunteers. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact us at [volunteer@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:volunteer@thisoldhouse.com).

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